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# THE LIVES OF THE MOST EMINENT ENGLISH POETS;

WITH

CRITICAL OBSERVATIONS

ON THEIR

# WORKS.

By SAMUEL JOHNSON.

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VOLUME III.

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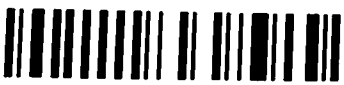
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# PRIOR.

# PRIOR.

MATTHEW PRIOR is one of thoſe that have burſt out from an obſcure original to great eminence. He was born July 21, 1664, according to ſome, at Winburne in Dorſetſhire, of. I know not what parents; others ſay that he was the ſon of a Joiner of London: he was perhaps willing enough to leave his birth unſettled, in hope, like Don Quixote, that the hiſtorian of his actions might find him ſome illuſtrious alliance*.

He

* The difficulty of ſettling Prior's birth-place is great. In the regiſter of his College he is called, at his admiſſion by the Preſident, *Matthew Prior* of *Winburn* in *Middleſex*; by himſelf next day, *Matthew Prior* of *Dorſetſhire*, in which county, not in Middleſex, *Winborn*, or *Wimborne*, as it ſtands in the *Villare*, is found. When he ſtood candidate for his fellowſhip, five years afterwards, he was regiſtered again by himſelf as of *Middleſex*. The laſt record ought to be

He is ſuppoſed to have fallen, by his father's death, into the hands of his uncle, a vintner near Charing-croſs, who ſent him for ſome time to Dr. Buſby at Weſtminſter; but, not intending to give him any education beyond that of the ſchool, took him, when he was well advanced in literature, to his own houſe; where the earl of Dorſet, celebrated for patronage of genius, found him by chance, as Burnet relates, reading Horace, and was ſo well pleaſed with his proficiency, that he undertook the care and coſt of his academical education.

He entered his name in St. John's College at Cambridge in 1682, in his eighteenth year; and it may be reaſonably ſuppoſed that he was diſtinguiſhed among his contemporaries. He became a Bachelor, as is uſual, in four years; and two years afterwards wrote the poem on the *Deity*, which ſtands firſt in his volume.

It is the eſtabliſhed practice of that College to ſend every year to the earl of Exeter ſome

preferred, becauſe it was made upon oath. It is obſervable, that, as a native of *Winborne*, he is ſtiled *Filius Georgii Prior, generoſi*; not conſiſtently with the common account of the meanneſs of his birth.

poems

poems upon ſacred ſubjects, in acknowledgment of a benefaction enjoyed by them from the bounty of his anceſtor. On this occaſion were thoſe verſes written, which, though nothing is ſaid of their ſucceſs, ſeem to have recommended him to ſome notice; for his praiſe of the counteſs's muſic, and his lines on the famous picture of Seneca, afford reaſon for imagining that he was more or leſs converſant with that family.

The ſame year he publiſhed the *City Mouſe and Country Mouſe*, to ridicule Dryden's *Hind and Panther*, in conjunction with Mr. Montague. There is a ſtory* of great pain ſuffered, and of tears ſhed, on this occaſion, by Dryden, who thought it hard that *an old man ſhould be ſo treated by thoſe to whom he had always been civil.* By tales like theſe is the envy raiſed by ſuperior abilities every day gratified: when they are attacked, every one hopes to ſee them humbled; what is hoped is readily believed, and what is believed is confidently told. Dryden had been more accuſtomed to hoſtilities, than that ſuch enemies ſhould break his quiet; and if we can ſuppoſe

* Spence.

him vexed, it would be hard to deny him ſenſe enough to conceal his uneaſineſs.

The *City Mouſe and Country Mouſe* procured its authors more ſolid advantages than the pleaſure of fretting Dryden; for they were both ſpeedily preferred. Montague indeed obtained the firſt notice, with ſome degree of diſcontent, as it ſeems, in Prior, who probably knew that his own part of the performance was the beſt. He had not, however, much reaſon to complain; for he came to London, and obtained ſuch notice, that (in 1691) he was ſent to the congreſs at The Hague as ſecretary to the embaſſy. In this aſſembly of princes and nobles, to which Europe has perhaps ſcarcely ſeen any thing equal, was formed the grand alliance againſt Lewis; which at laſt did not produce effects proportionate to the magnificence of the tranſaction.

The conduct of Prior, in this ſplendid initiation into public buſineſs, was ſo pleaſing to king William, that he made him one of the gentlemen of his bedchamber; and he is ſuppoſed to have paſſed ſome of the next years in the cultivation of literature and poetry.

The

The death of queen Mary (in 1695) produced a ſubject for all the writers: perhaps no funeral was ever ſo poetically attended. Dryden, indeed, as a man diſcountenanced and deprived, was ſilent; but ſcarcely any other maker of verſes omitted to bring his tribute of tuneful ſorrow. An emulation of elegy was univerſal. Maria's praiſe was not confined to the Engliſh language, but fills a great part of the *Muſæ Anglicanæ*.

Prior, who was both a poet and a courtier, was not likely to miſs this opportunity of reſpect. He wrote a long ode, which was preſented to the king, by whom it was not likely to be ever read.

In two years he was ſecretary to another embaſſy at the treaty of Ryſwick (in 1697); and next year had the ſame office at the court of France, where he is ſaid to have been conſidered with great diſtinction.

As he was one day ſurveying the apartments at Verſailles, being ſhewn the Victories of Lewis, painted by Le Brun, and aſked

whether the king of England's palace had any ſuch decorations; *The monuments of my Maſter's actions*, ſaid he, *are to be ſeen every-where but in his own houſe.* The pictures of Le Brun are not only in themſelves ſufficiently oſtentatious, but were explained by inſcriptions ſo arrogant, that Boileau and Racine thought it neceſſary to make them more ſimple.

He was in the following year at Loo with the king; from whom, after a long audience, he carried orders to England, and upon his arrival became under-ſecretary of ſtate in the earl of Jerſey's office; a poſt which he did not retain long, becauſe Jerſey was removed; but he was ſoon made commiſſioner of Trade.

This year (1700) produced one of his longeſt and moſt ſplendid compoſitions, the *Carmen Seculare*, in which he exhauſts all his powers of celebration. I mean not to accuſe him of flattery; he probably thought all that he writ, and retained as much veracity as can be properly exacted from a poet profeſſedly encomiaſtic. King William ſupplied copious materials for either verſe or proſe.

His

His whole life had been action, and no man ever denied him the reſplendent qualities of ſteady reſolution and perſonal courage. He was really in Prior's mind what he repreſents him in his verſes; he conſidered him as a hero, and was accuſtomed to ſay, that he praiſed others in compliance with the faſhion, but that in celebrating king William he followed his inclination. To Prior gratitude would dictate praiſe, which reaſon would not refuſe.

Among the advantages to ariſe from the future years of William's reign, he mentions *Societies for uſeful Arts*, and among them

Some that with care true eloquence ſhall teach,
And to juſt idioms fix our doubtful ſpeech;
That from our writers diſtant realms may know
The thanks we to our monarch owe,
And ſchools profeſs our tongue through every land,
That has invok'd his aid, or bleſs'd his hand.

Tickell, in his *Proſpect of Peace*, has the ſame hope of a new academy:

In happy chains our daring language bound,
Shall ſport no more in arbitrary ſound.

Whether

Whether the ſimilitude of thoſe paſſages which exhibit the ſame thought on the ſame occaſion proceeded from accident or imitation, is not eaſy to determine. Tickell might have been impreſſed with his expectation by Swift's *Propoſal for aſcertaining the Engliſh Language*, then lately publiſhed.

In the parliament that met in 1701, he was choſen repreſentative of Eaſt Grinſtead. Perhaps it was about this time that he changed his party; for he voted for the impeachment of thoſe lords who had perſuaded the king to the Partition-treaty, a treaty in which he had himſelf been miniſterially employed.

A great part of queen Anne's reign was a time of war, in which there was little employment for negotiators, and Prior had therefore leiſure to make or to poliſh verſes. When the battle of Blenheim called forth all the verſe-men, Prior, among the reſt, took care to ſhew his delight in the increaſing honour of his country by an Epiſtle to Boileau.

He publiſhed ſoon afterwards a volume of poems, with the encomiaſtic character of his deceaſed

deceaſed patron the duke of Dorſet: it began with the College Exerciſe, and ended with the *Nut-brown Maid.*

The battle of Ramillies ſoon afterwards (in 1706) excited him to another effort of poetry. On this occaſion he had fewer or leſs formidable rivals; and it would be not eaſy to name any other compoſition produced by that event which is now remembered.

Every thing has its day. Through the reigns of William and Anne no proſperous event paſſed undignified by poetry. In the laſt war, when France was diſgraced and overpowered in every quarter of the globe, when Spain coming to her aſſiſtance only ſhared her calamities, and the name of an Engliſhman was reverenced through Europe, no poet was heard amidſt the general acclamation; the fame of our counſellors and heroes was intruſted to the Gazetteer.

The nation in time grew weary of the war, and the queen grew weary of her miniſters. The war was burdenſome, and the miniſters were inſolent. Harley and his friends

friends began to hope that they might, by driving the Whigs from court and from power, gratify at once the queen and the people. There was now a call for writers, who might convey intelligence of paſt abuſes, and ſhew the waſte of public money, the unreaſonable *Conduct of the Allies*, the avarice of generals, the tyranny of minions, and the general danger of approaching ruin.

For this purpoſe a paper called the *Examiner* was periodically publiſhed, written, as it happened, by any wit of the party, and ſometimes as is ſaid by Mrs. Manley. Some are owned by Swift; and one, in ridicule of Garth's verſes to Godolphin upon the loſs of his place, was written by Prior, and anſwered by Addiſon, who appears to have known the author either by conjecture or intelligence.

The Tories, who were now in power, were in haſte to end the war; and Prior, being recalled (1710) to his former employment of making treaties, was ſent (July 1711) privately to Paris with propoſitions of peace. He was remembered at the French court; and,

and, returning in about a month, brought with him M. Meſnager, a miniſter from France, inveſted with full powers, and the Abbé Gaultier.

This tranſaction not being avowed, Mackay, the maſter of the Dover packet-boat, either zealouſly or officiouſly, ſeized Prior and his aſſociates at Canterbury. It is eaſily ſuppoſed that they were ſoon releaſed.

The negotiation was begun at Prior's houſe, where the Queen's miniſters met Meſnager (September 20, 1711), and entered privately upon the great buſineſs. The importance of Prior appears from the mention made of him by St. John in his Letter to the Queen.

" My Lord Treaſurer moved, and all my " Lords were of the ſame opinion, that Mr. " Prior ſhould be added to thoſe who are " impowered to ſign; the reaſon for which " is, becauſe he, having perſonally treated " with Monſieur de Torcy, is the beſt wit- " neſs we can produce of the ſenſe in which " the general preliminary engagements are " entered into: beſides which, as he is the

"beſt verſed in matters of trade of all your "Majeſty's ſervants who have been truſted "in this ſecret, if you ſhall think fit to em-"ploy him in the future treaty of commerce, "it will be of conſequence that he has been "a party concerned in concluding that con-"vention, which muſt be the rule of this "treaty."

The aſſembly of this important night was in ſome degree clandeſtine, the deſign of treating not being yet openly declared, and, when the Whigs returned to power, was aggravated to a charge of high treaſon; though, as Prior remarks in his imperfect anſwer to the Report of the *Committee of Secrecy*, no treaty ever was made without private interviews and preliminary diſcuſſions.

My buſineſs is not the hiſtory of the peace, but the life of Prior. The conferences began at Utrecht on the firſt of January (1711-12), and the Engliſh plenipotentiaries arrived on the fifteenth. The miniſters of the different potentates conferred and conferred; but the peace advanced ſo ſlowly, that ſpeedier methods were found neceſſary, and Boling-

broke

broke was ſent to Paris to adjuſt differences with leſs formality; Prior either accompanied him or followed him; and after his departure had the appointments and authority of an ambaſſador, though no public character.

By ſome miſtake of the Queen's orders, the court of France had been diſguſted; and Bolingbroke ſays in his Letter, "Dear Mat, "hide the nakedneſs of thy country, and "give the beſt turn thy fertile brain will fur- "niſh thee with to the blunders of thy coun- "trymen, who are not much better politi- "cians than the French are poets."

Soon after the duke of Shrewſbury went on a formal embaſſy to Paris. It is related by Boyer, that the intention was to have joined Prior in the ſame commiſſion, but that Shrewſbury refuſed to be aſſociated with a man ſo meanly born. Prior therefore continued to act without a title till the duke returned next year to England, and then he aſſumed the ſtyle and dignity of embaſſador.

But, while he continued in appearance a private man, he was treated with confidence

by Lewis, who ſent him with a letter to the Queen, written in favour of the elector of Bavaria. "I ſhall expect," ſays he, "with "impatience, the return of Mr. Prior, whoſe "conduct is very agreeable to me." And while the Duke of Shrewſbury was ſtill at Paris, Bolingbroke wrote to Prior thus: "Monſieur de Torcy has a confidence in "you; make uſe of it, once for all, upon "this occaſion, and convince him thoroughly, "that we muſt give a different turn to our "parliament and our people, according to "their reſolution at this criſis."

Prior's public dignity and ſplendour commenced in Auguſt 1713, and continued till the Auguſt following; but I am afraid that, according to the uſual fate of greatneſs, it was attended with ſome perplexities and mortifications. He had not all that is cuſtomarily given to ambaſſadors: he hints to the queen, in an imperfect poem, that he had no ſervice of plate; and it appeared, by the debts which he contracted, that his remittances were not punctually made.

On

On the firſt of Auguſt 1714, enſued the downfall of the Tories and the degradation of Prior. He was recalled; but was not able to return, being detained by the debts which he had found it neceſſary to contract, and which were not diſcharged before March, though his old friend Montague was now at the head of the treaſury.

He returned then as ſoon as he could, and was welcomed on the 25th of March by a warrant, but was, however, ſuffered to live in his own houſe, under the cuſtody of the meſſenger, till he was examined before a committee of the Privy Council, of which Mr. Walpole was chairman, and lord Coningſby, Mr. Stanhope, and Mr. Lechmere, were the principal interrogators; who, in this examination, of which there is printed an account not unentertaining, behaved with the boiſterouſneſs of men elated by recent authority. They are repreſented as aſking queſtions ſometimes vague, ſometimes inſidious, and writing anſwers different from thoſe which they received. Prior, however, ſeems to have been overpowered by their turbulence; for he confeſſes that he ſigned what,

if he had ever come before a legal judicature, he ſhould have contradicted or explained away. The oath was adminiſtered by Boſcawen, a Middleſex juſtice, who at laſt was going to write his atteſtation on the wrong ſide of the paper.

They were very induſtrious to find ſome charge againſt Oxford, and aſked Prior, with great earneſtneſs, who was preſent when the preliminary articles were talked of or ſigned at his houſe. He told them, that either the earl of Oxford or the duke of Shrewſbury was abſent, but he could not remember which; an anſwer which perplexed them, becauſe it ſupplied no accuſation againſt either. "Could any thing be more abſurd," ſays he, "or more inhuman, than to propoſe "to me a queſtion, by the anſwering of "which I might, according to them, "prove myſelf a traitor? And notwithſtanding their ſolemn promiſe, that nothing "which I could ſay ſhould hurt myſelf, I "had no reaſon to truſt them: for they violated that promiſe about five hours after. "However, I owned I was there preſent.

"Whether

" Whether this was wiſely done or no, I " leave to my friends to determine."

When he had ſigned the paper, he was told by Walpole, that the committee were not ſatisfied with his behaviour, nor could give ſuch an account of it to the Commons as might merit favour; and that they now thought a ſtricter confinement neceſſary than to his own houſe. " Here," ſays he, " Boſcawen played the moraliſt, and Co- " ningſby the chriſtian, but both very auk- " wardly." The meſſenger, in whoſe cuſtody he was to be placed, was then called, and very decently aſked by Coningſby, *if his houſe was ſecured by bars and bolts?* The meſſenger anſwered, *No*, with aſtoniſhment; at which Coningſby very angrily ſaid, *Sir, you muſt ſecure this priſoner; it is for the ſafety of the nation: if he eſcape, you ſhall anſwer for it.*

They had already printed their report; and in this examination were endeavouring to find proofs.

He continued thus confined for ſome time; and Mr. Walpole (June 10, 1715) moved for

an impeachment againſt him. What made him ſo acrimonious does not appear: he was by nature no thirſter for blood. Prior was a week after committed to cloſe cuſtody, with orders that *no perſon ſhould be admitted to ſee him without leave from the Speaker.*

When, two years after, an Act of Grace was paſſed, he was excepted, and continued ſtill in cuſtody, which he had made leſs tedious by writing his *Alma*. He was, however, ſoon after diſcharged.

He had now his liberty, but he had nothing elſe. Whatever the profit of his employments might have been, he had always ſpent it; and at the age of fifty-three was, with all his abilities, in danger of penury, having yet no ſolid revenue but from the fellowſhip of his college, which, when in his exaltation he was cenſured for retaining it, he ſaid, he could live upon at laſt.

Being however generally known and eſteemed, he was encouraged to add other poems to thoſe which he had printed, and publiſhed them by ſubſcription. The expedient

ſucceeded

ſucceeded by the induſtry of many friends, who circulated the propoſals*, and the care of ſome, who, it is ſaid, withheld the money from him, leſt he ſhould ſquander it. The price of the volume was two guineas; the whole collection was four thouſand; to which lord Harley, the ſon of the earl of Oxford, to whom he had invariably adhered, added an equal ſum for the purchaſe of Down-hall, which Prior was to enjoy during life, and Harley after his deceaſe.

He had now, what wits and philoſophers have often wiſhed, the power of paſſing the day in contemplative tranquillity. But it ſeems that buſy men ſeldom live long in a ſtate of quiet. It is not unlikely that his health declined. He complains of deafneſs; *for*, ſays he, *I took little care of my ears while I was not ſure if my head was my own.*

Of any occurrences in his remaining life I have found no account. In a letter to Swift, "I have," ſays he, "treated lady Har-"riot at Cambridge. A Fellow of a College "treat! and ſpoke verſes to her in a gown "and cap! What, the plenipotentiary, ſo far

* Swift obtained *many* ſubſcriptions for him in Ireland.

" concerned in the damned peace at Utrecht!
" the man that makes up half the volume of
" terſe proſe, that makes up the report of
" the committee, ſpeaking verſe! *Sic eſt,*
" *homo ſum.*"

He died at *Wimpole*, a ſeat of the earl of Oxford, on the eighteenth of September 1721, and was buried in Weſtminſter; where on a monument, for which, as the *laſt piece of human vanity*, he left five hundred pounds, is engraven this epitaph:

Sui Temporis Hiſtoriam meditanti,
Paulatim obrepens Febris
Operi ſimul & Vitæ filum abrupit,
Sept. 18. An. Dom. 1721. Ætat. 57.
H. S. E.
Vir Eximius
Sereniſſimis
Regi GULIELMO Reginæque MARIÆ
In Congreſſione Fœderatorum
Hagæ anno 1690 celebrata,
Deinde Magnæ Britanniæ Legatis
Tum iis,
Qui anno 1697 Pacem RYSWICKI confecerunt,
Tum iis,
Qui apud Gallos annis proximis Legationem obierunt;
Eodem etiam anno 1697 in Hiberniæ

SECRE-

SECRETARIUS;
Nec non in utroque Honorabili conſeſſu
Eorum,
Qui anno 1700 ordinandis Commercii negotiis
Quique anno 1711 dirigendis Portorii rebus
Præſidebant,
COMMISSIONARIUS;
Poſtremo
Ab ANNA
Feliciſſimæ memoriæ Reginâ
Ad LUDOWICUM XIV. Galliæ Regem
Miſſus anno 1711
De Pace ſtabilienda,
(Pace etiamnum durante
Diuque ut boni jam omnes ſperant duratura)
Cum ſumma poteſtate Legatus.
MATTHÆUS PRIOR Armiger;
Qui
Hos omnes, quibus cumulatus eſt, Titulos
Humanitatis, Ingenii Eruditionis Laude
Superavit;
Cui enim naſcenti faciles arriſerant Muſæ.
Hunc Puerum Schola hic Regia perpolivit;
Juvenem in Collegio Sti. Johannis
Cantabrigia optimis Scientiis inſtruxit;
Virum denique auxit & perfecit
Multa cum viris Principibus conſuetudo;
Ita natus, ita inſtitutus,
A Vatum Choro avelli nunquam potuit,
Sed ſolebat ſæpe rerum Civilium gravitatem
Amœniorum Literarum Studiis condire;

Et cum omne adeo Poetices genus
Haud infeliciter tentaret,
Tum in Fabellis concinne lepideq; texendis
Mirus Artifex
Neminem habuit parem.
Hæc liberalis animi oblectamenta;
Quam nullo Illi labore conſtiterint,
Facile ii perſpexere, quibus uſus eſt Amici;
Apud quos Urbanitatum & Leporum plenus
Cum ad rem, quæcunque forte inciderat,
Aptè variè copioſeque alluderet,
Interea nihil quæſitum, nihil vi expreſſum
Videbatur,
Sed omnia ultro effluere,
Et quaſi jugi è fonte affatim exuberare
Ita Suos tandem dubios reliquit,
Eſſetne in Scriptis, Poeta Elegantior,
An in Convictu, Comes Jucundior.

Of Prior, eminent as he was, both by his abilities and ſtation, very few memorials have been left by his contemporaries; the account therefore muſt now be deſtitute of his private character and familiar practices. He lived at a time when the rage of party detected all which it was any man's intereſt to hide; and as little ill is heard of Prior, it is certain that not much was known. He was not afraid of provoking cenſure; for when he forſook the Whigs

Whigs *, under whoſe patronage he firſt entered the world, he became a Tory ſo ardent and determinate, that he did not willingly conſort with men of different opinions. He was one of the ſixteen Tories who met weekly, and agreed to addreſs each other by the title of *Brother*; and ſeems to have adhered, not only by concurrence of political deſigns, but by peculiar affection, to the earl of Oxford and his family. With how much confidence he was truſted, has been already told.

He was however, in Pope's * opinion, fit only to make verſes, and leſs qualified for buſineſs than Addiſon himſelf. This was ſurely ſaid without conſideration. Addiſon, exalted to a high place, was forced into degradation by the ſenſe of his own incapacity; Prior, who was employed by men very capable of eſtimating his value, having been ſecretary to one embaſſy, had, when great abilities were again wanted, the ſame office another time; and was, after ſo much experience of his knowledge and dexterity, at laſt ſent to tranſact a negotiation in the higheſt degree arduous and important; for which he was quali-

* Spence.

fied,

fied, among other requiſites, in the opinion of Bolingbroke, by his influence upon the French miniſter, and by ſkill in queſtions of commerce above other men.

Of his behaviour in the lighter parts of life, it is too late to get much intelligence. One of his anſwers to a boaſtful Frenchman has been related, and to an impertinent he made another equally proper. During his embaſſy, he ſat at the opera by a man, who, in his rapture, accompanied with his own voice the principal ſinger. Prior fell to railing at the performer with all the terms of reproach that he could collect, till the Frenchman, ceaſing from his ſong, began to expoſtulate with him for his harſh cenſure of a man who was confeſſedly the ornament of the ſtage. "I know all "that," ſays the ambaſſador, "*mais il chante ſi* "*haut, que je ne ſcaurois vous entendre.*"

In a gay French company, where every one ſung a little ſong or ſtanza, of which the burden was, *Banniſſons la Melancholie*; when it came to his turn to ſing, after the performance of a young lady that ſat next him, he produced theſe extemporary lines;

Mais

Mais celle voix, et ces beaux yeux,
[illegible]ront Cupidon trop dangereux,
[illegible] je ſuis triſte quand je crie
conſ[illegible]iſſons la Melancholie.

Tradition repreſents him as willing to deſcend from the dignity of the poet and the ſtateſman to the low delights of mean company. His Chloe probably was ſometimes ideal; but the woman with whom he cohabited was a deſpicable drab * of the loweſt ſpecies. One of his wenches, perhaps Chloe, while he was abſent from his houſe, ſtole his plate, and ran away; as was related by a woman who had been his ſervant. Of this propenſity to ſordid converſe I have ſeen an account ſo ſeriouſly ridiculous, that it ſeems to deſerve inſertion.

" I have been aſſured that Prior, after hav-
" ing ſpent the evening with Oxford, Boling-
" broke, Pope, and Swift, would go and ſmoke
" a pipe, and drink a bottle of ale, with a
" common ſoldier and his wife, in Long-
" Acre, before he went to bed; not from any
" remains of the lowneſs of his original, as
" one ſaid, but, I ſuppoſe, that his faculties

* Spence.

" —Strain'd

" —Strain'd to the height,
" In that celeſtial colloquy ſublime,
" Dazzled and ſpent, ſunk down, and ſought
" repair."

Poor Prior! why was he ſo *ſtrained*, and in ſuch *want* of *repair*, after a converſation with men not, in the opinion of the world, much wiſer than himſelf? But ſuch are the conceits of ſpeculatiſts, who *ſtrain* their *faculties* to find in a mine what lies upon the ſurface.

His opinions, ſo far as the means of judging are left us, ſeem to have been right; but his life was, it ſeems, irregular, negligent, and ſenſual.

PRIOR has written with great variety, and his variety has made him popular. He has tried all ſtyles from the groteſque to the ſolemn, and has not ſo failed in any as to incur deriſion or diſgrace.

His works may be diſtinctly conſidered as compriſing Tales, Love-verſes, Occaſional Poems, Alma, and Solomon.

His Tales have obtained general approbation, being written with great familiarity and great ſpritelineſs: the language is eaſy, but ſeldom groſs, and the numbers ſmooth, without appearance of care. Of theſe Tales there are only four. The *Ladle;* which is introduced by a Preface, neither neceſſary nor pleaſing, neither grave nor merry. *Paulo Purganti*; which has likewiſe a Preface, but of more value than the Tale. *Hans Carvel*, not over-decent; and *Protogenes* and *Apelles*, an old ſtory, mingled, by an affectation not diſagreeable, with modern images. The *Young Gentleman*

*tleman in Love* has hardly a juſt claim to the title of *a Tale.* I know not whether he be the original author of any Tale which he has given us. The Adventure of *Hans Carvel* has paſſed through many ſucceſſions of merry wits; for it is to be found in Arioſto's Satires, and is perhaps yet older. But the merit of ſuch ſtories is the art of telling them.

In his Amorous Effuſions he is leſs happy; for they are not dictated by nature or by paſſion, and have neither gallantry nor tenderneſs. They have the coldneſs of Cowley, without his wit, the dull exerciſes of a ſkilful verſifyer, reſolved at all adventures to write ſomething about Chloe, and trying to be amorous by dint of ſtudy. His fictions therefore are mythological. Venus, after the example of the Greek Epigram, aſks when ſhe was ſeen *naked and bathing.* Then *Cupid* is *miſtaken;* then *Cupid* is *diſarmed;* then he loſes his darts to *Ganymede*; then *Jupiter* ſends him a ſummons by *Mercury.* Then *Chloe* goes a-hunting, with an *ivory quiver graceful at her ſide;* Diana miſtakes her for one of her nymphs, and Cupid laughs at the blunder. All this is ſurely deſpicable; and even when

he

he tries to act the lover, without the help of gods or goddeſſes, his thoughts are unaffecting or remote. He talks not *like a man of this world.*

The greateſt of all his amorous eſſays is *Henry* and *Emma*; a dull and tedious dialogue, which excites neither eſteem for the man nor tenderneſs for the woman. The example of Emma, who reſolves to follow an outlawed murderer wherever fear and guilt ſhall drive him, deſerves no imitation; and the experiment by which Henry tries the lady's conſtancy, is ſuch as muſt end either in infamy to her, or in diſappointment to himſelf.

His occaſional Poems neceſſarily loſt part of their value, as their occaſions, being leſs remembered, raiſed leſs emotion. Some of them, however, are preſerved by their inherent excellence. The burleſque of Boileau's Ode on Namur has, in ſome parts, ſuch airineſs and levity as will always procure it readers, even among thoſe who cannot compare it with the original. The Epiſtle to Boileau is not ſo happy. The Poems to the King are

now peruſed only by young ſtudents, who read merely that they may learn to write; and of the *Carmen Seculare*, I cannot but ſuſpect that I might praiſe or cenſure it by caprice, without danger of detection; for who can be ſuppoſed to have laboured through it? Yet the time has been when this neglected work was ſo popular, that it was tranſlated into Latin by no common maſter.

His Poem on the battle of Ramillies is neceſſarily tedious by the form of the ſtanza: an uniform maſs of ten lines, thirty-five times repeated, inconſequential and ſlightly connected, muſt weary both the ear and the underſtanding. His imitation of Spenſer, which conſiſts principally in *I ween* and *I weet*, without excluſion of later modes of ſpeech, makes his poem neither ancient nor modern. His mention of *Mars* and *Bellona*, and his compariſon of Marlborough to the Eagle that bears the thunder of *Jupiter*, are all puerile and unaffecting; and yet more deſpicable is the long tale told by *Lewis* in his deſpair, of *Brute* and *Troynovante*, and the teeth of *Cadmus*, with his ſimilies of the raven and eagle, and wolf

and

and lion. By the help of ſuch eaſy fictions, and vulgar topicks, without acquaintance with life, and without knowledge of art or nature, a poem of any length, cold and lifeleſs like this, may be eaſily written on any ſubject.

In his Epilogues to *Phædra* and to *Lucius*, he is very happily facetious; but into the Prologue before the Queen, the pedant has found his way, with Minerva, Perſeus, and Andromeda.

His Epigrams and lighter pieces are, like thoſe of others, ſometimes elegant, ſometimes trifling, and ſometimes dull; among the beſt are the *Camelion*, and the epitaph on *John* and *Joan*.

Scarcely any one of our poets has written ſo much, and tranſlated ſo little: the verſion of Callimachus is ſufficiently licentious; the paraphraſe on St. Paul's Exhortation to Charity is eminently beautiful.

*Alma* is written in profeſſed imitation of Hudibras, and has at leaſt one accidental reſemblance: Hudibras wants a plan, becauſe it

is left imperfect; Alma is imperfect, becauſe it ſeems never to have had a plan. Prior appears not to have propoſed to himſelf any drift or deſign, but to have written the caſual dictates of the preſent moment.

What Horace ſaid when he imitated Lucilius, might be ſaid of Butler by Prior, his numbers were not ſmooth or neat: Prior excelled him in verſification, but he was, like Horace, *inventore minor*; he had not Butler's exuberance of matter and variety of illuſtration. The ſpangles of wit which he could afford, he knew how to poliſh; but he wanted the bullion of his maſter. Butler pours out a negligent profuſion, certain of the weight, but careleſs of the ſtamp. Prior has comparatively little, but with that little he makes a fine ſhew. Alma has many admirers, and was the only piece among Prior's works of which Pope ſaid that he ſhould wiſh to be the author.

*Solomon* is the work to which he entruſted the protection of his name, and which he expected ſucceeding ages to regard with veneration. His affection was natural; it had undoubtedly been written with great labour, and

who

who is willing to think that he has been labouring in vain? He had infuſed into it much knowledge and much thought; had often poliſhed it to elegance, often dignified it with ſplendour, and ſometimes heightened it to ſublimity: he perceived in it many excellencies, and did not diſcover that it wanted that without which all others are of ſmall avail, the power of engaging attention and alluring curioſity.

Tediouſneſs is the moſt fatal of all faults; negligences or errors are ſingle and local, but tediouſneſs pervades the whole; other faults are cenſured and forgotten, but the power of tediouſneſs propagates itſelf. He that is weary the firſt hour, is more weary the ſecond; as bodies forced into motion, contrary to their tendency, paſs more and more ſlowly through every ſucceſſive interval of ſpace.

Unhappily this pernicious failure is that which an author is leaſt able to diſcover. We are ſeldom tireſome to ourſelves; and the act of compoſition fills and delights the mind with change of language and ſucceſſion of images; every couplet when produced is new, and novelty is the great ſource of pleaſure. Per-

haps no man ever thought a line ſuperfluous when he firſt wrote it, or contracted his work till his ebullitions of invention had ſubſided. If he ſhould controul his deſire of immediate renown, and keep his work *nine years* unpubliſhed, he will be ſtill the author, and ſtill in danger of deceiving himſelf; and if he conſults his friends, he will probably find men who have more kindneſs than judgement, or more fear to offend than deſire to inſtruct.

The tedioſuneſs of this poem proceeds not from the uniformity of the ſubject, for it is ſufficiently diverſified, but from the continued tenour of the narration; in which Solomon relates the ſucceſſive viciſſitudes of his own mind, without the intervention of any other ſpeaker, or the mention of any other agent, unleſs it be Abra; and the reader is only to learn what he thought, and to be told that he thought wrong. The event of every experiment is foreſeen, and therefore the proceſs is not much regarded.

Yet the work is far from deſerving to be neglected. He that ſhall peruſe it will be able to mark many paſſages, to which he may recur for inſtruction or delight; many from which

which the poet may learn to write, and the philoſopher to reaſon.

If Prior's poetry be generally conſidered, his praiſe will be that of correctneſs and induſtry, rather than of compaſs of comprehenſion, or activity of fancy. He never made any effort of invention: his greater pieces were all tiſſues of ſentiment; and his ſmaller, which conſiſt of light images or ſingle conceits, were not always his own. I have traced him among the French Epigrammatiſts, and have been informed that he poached for prey among obſcure aathors. The *Thief and the Cordelier* is, I ſuppoſe, generally conſidered as an original production; with how much juſtice this Epigram may tell, which was written by Georgius Sabinus, a poet now little known or read, though once the friend of Luther and Melancthon;

De Sacerdote Furem conſolante.

Quidam ſacrificus furem comitatus euntem
Huc ubi dat fontes carnificina neci.
Ne ſis mœſtus, ait; ſummi conviva Tonantis
Jam cum cœlitibus (ſi modo credis) eris.
Ille gemens, ſi vera mihi ſolatia præbes,
Hoſpes apud ſuperos ſis meus oro, refert.

Sacrificus contra; mihi non convivia fas eſt
Ducere, jejunans hac edo luce nihil.

What he has valuable he owes to his diligence and his judgement. His diligence has juſtly placed him amongſt the moſt correct of the Engliſh poets; and he was one of the firſt that reſolutely endeavoured at correctneſs. He never ſacrifices accuracy to haſte, nor indulges himſelf in contemptuous negligence, or impatient idleneſs; he has no careleſs lines, or entangled ſentiments; his words are nicely ſelected, and his thoughts fully expanded. If this part of his character ſuffers any abatement, it muſt be from the diſproportion of his rhymes, which have not always ſufficient conſonance, and from the admiſſion of broken lines into his *Solomon*; but perhaps he thought, like Cowley, that hemiſtichs ought to be admitted into heroic poetry.

He had apparently ſuch rectitude of judgement as ſecured him from every thing that approached to the ridiculous or abſurd; but as laws operate in civil agency not to the excitement of virtue, but the repreſſion of wickedneſs, ſo judgement in the operations of

intellect can hinder faults, but not produce excellence. Prior is never low, nor very often ſublime. It is ſaid by Longinus of Euripides, that he forces himſelf ſometimes into grandeur by violence of effort, as the lion kindles his fury by the laſhes of his own tail. Whatever Prior obtains above mediocrity ſeems the effort of ſtruggle and of toil. He has many vigorous but few happy lines; he has every thing by purchaſe, and nothing by gift; he had no *nightly viſitations* of the Muſe, no infuſions of ſentiment or felicities of fancy.

His diction, however, is more his own than that of any among the ſucceſſors of Dryden; he borrows no lucky turns, or commodious modes of language, from his predeceſſors. His phraſes are original, but they are ſometimes harſh; as he inherited no elegances, none has he bequeathed. His expreſſion has every mark of laborious ſtudy; the line ſeldom ſeems to have been formed at once; the words did not come till they were called, and were then put by conſtraint into their places, where they do their duty, but do it ſullenly. In his greater compoſitions

there may be found more rigid ſtatelineſs than graceful dignity.

Of verſification he was not negligent: what he received from Dryden he did not loſe; neither did he increaſe the difficulty of writing, by unneceſſary ſeverity, but uſes Triplets and Alexandrines without ſcruple. In his Preface to *Solomon* he propoſes ſome improvements, by extending the ſenſe from one couplet to another, with variety of pauſes. This he has attempted, but without ſucceſs; his interrupted lines are unpleaſing, and his ſenſe as leſs diſtinct is leſs ſtriking.

He has altered the Stanza of Spenſer, as a houſe is altered by building another in its place of a different form. With how little reſemblance he has formed his new Stanza to that of his maſter, theſe ſpecimens will ſhew.

SPENSER.

She flying faſt from heaven's hated face,
And from the world that her diſcover'd wide,
Fled to the waſteful wilderneſs apace,
From living eyes her open ſhame to hide,
And lurk'd in rocks and caves long uneſpy'd.

But that fair crew of knights, and Una fair,
Did in that caſtle afterwards abide,
To reſt themſelves, and weary powers repair,
Where ſtore they found of all, that dainty was and rare,

PRIOR.

To the cloſe rock the frighted raven flies,
Soon as the riſing eagle cuts the air:
The ſhaggy wolf unſeen and trembling lies,
When the hoarſe roar proclaims the lion near.
Ill-ſtarr'd did we our forts and lines forſake,
To dare our Britiſh foes to open fight:
Our conqueſt we by ſtratagem ſhould make:
Our triumph had been founded in our flight.
'Tis ours, by craft and by ſurpriſe to gain:
'Tis theirs, to meet in arms, and battle in the plain.

By this new ſtructure of his lines he has avoided difficulties; nor am I ſure that he has loſt any of the power of pleaſing; but he no longer imitates Spenſer.

Some of his poems are written without regularity of meaſures; for, when he commenced poet, we had not recovered from our Pindarick infatuation; but he probably lived

lived to be convinced that the eſſence of verſe is order and conſonance.

His numbers are ſuch as mere diligence may attain; they ſeldom offend the ear, and ſeldom ſooth it; they commonly want airineſs, lightneſs, and facility; what is ſmooth, is not ſoft. His verſes always roll, but they ſeldom flow.

A ſurvey of the life and writings of Prior may exemplify a ſentence which he doubtleſs underſtood well, when he read Horace at his uncle's; *the veſſel long retains the ſcent which it firſt receives.* In his private relaxation he revived the tavern, and in his amorous pedantry he exhibited the college. But on higher occaſions, and nobler ſubjects, when habit was overpowered by the neceſſity of reflection, he wanted not wiſdom as a ſtateſman, nor elegance as a poet.

CON-

# CONGREVE.

# CONGREVE.

WILLIAM CONGREVE deſcended from a family in Staffordſhire, of ſo great antiquity that it claims a place among the few that extend their line beyond the Norman Conqueſt; and was the ſon of William Congreve, ſecond ſon of Richard Congreve of Congreve and Stratton. He viſited, once at leaſt, the reſidence of his anceſtors; and, I believe, more places than one are ſtill ſhewn, in groves and gardens, where he is related to have written his *Old Batchelor*.

Neither the time nor place of his birth are certainly known: if the inſcription upon his monument be true, he was born in 1672. For the place; it was ſaid by himſelf that he owed his nativity to England, and by every body elſe that he was born in Ireland. South-

ern

ern mentioned him with ſharp cenſure, as a man that meanly diſowned his native country. The biographers aſſign his nativity to Bardſa*, near Leeds in Yorkſhire, from the account given by himſelf, as they ſuppoſe, to Jacob.

To doubt whether a man of eminence has told the truth about his own birth, is, in appearance, to be very deficient in candour; yet nobody can live long without knowing that falſehoods of convenience or vanity, falſehoods from which no evil immediately viſible enſues, except the general degradation of human teſtimony, are very lightly uttered, and, once uttered, are ſullenly ſupported. Boileau, who deſired to be thought a rigorous and ſteady moraliſt, having told a petty lie to Lewis XIV. continued it afterwards by falſe dates; thinking himſelf obliged *in honour*, ſays his admirer, to maintain what, when he ſaid it, was ſo well received.

Wherever Congreve was born, he was educated firſt at Kilkenny, and afterwards at Dublin, his father having ſome military employment that ſtationed him in Ireland: but

* The Villare has no *Bardſa*, nor *Bardſey*, in Yorkſhire.

after

after having paſſed through the uſual preparatory ſtudies, as may be reaſonably ſuppoſed with great celerity and ſucceſs, his father thought it proper to aſſign him a profeſſion, by which ſomething might be gotten; and about the time of the Revolution ſent him, at the age of ſixteen, to ſtudy law in the Middle Temple, where he lived for ſeveral years, but with very little attention to Statutes or Reports.*

His diſpoſition to become an author appeared very early, as he very early felt that force of imagination, and poſſeſſed that copiouſneſs of ſentiment, by which intellectual pleaſure can be given. His firſt performance was a novel, called *Incognita, or Love and Duty reconciled:* It is praiſed by the biographers, who quote ſome part of the preface, that is indeed, for ſuch a time of life, uncommonly judicious. I would rather praiſe it than read it.

His firſt dramatick labour was the *Old Batchelor*, of which he ſays, in his defence againſt Collier, "that comedy was written, "as ſeveral know, ſome years before it

* "was

" was acted. When I wrote it, I had little " thoughts of the ſtage; but did it, to amuſe " myſelf, in a ſlow recovery from a fit of " ſickneſs. Afterwards through my indiſ- " cretion it was ſeen, and in ſome little time " more it was acted; and I, through the re- " mainder of my indiſcretion, ſuffered myſelf " to be drawn in, to the proſecution of a " difficult. and thankleſs ſtudy, and to be in- " volved in a perpetual war with knaves and " fools."

There ſeems to be a ſtrange affectation in authors of appearing to have done every thing by chance. The *Old Batchelor* was written for amuſement, in the languor of convaleſcence. Yet it is apparently compoſed with great elaborateneſs of dialogue, and inceſſant ambition of wit. The age of the writer conſidered, it is indeed a very wonderful performance; for, whenever written, it was acted (1693) when he was not more than twenty-one years old; and was then recommended by Mr. Dryden, Mr. Southern, and Mr. Maynwaring. Dryden ſaid that he never had ſeen ſuch a firſt play; but they found it deficient in ſome things requiſite to

the ſucceſs of its exhibition, and by their greater experience ſitted it for the ſtage. Southern uſed to relate of one comedy, probably of this, that when Congreve read it to the players, he pronounced it ſo wretchedly that they had almoſt rejected it; but they were afterwards ſo well perſuaded of its excellence, that, for half a year before it was acted, the manager allowed its author the privilege of the houſe.

Few plays have ever been ſo beneficial to the writer; for it procured him the patronage of Halifax, who immediately made him one of the commiſſioners for licenſing coaches, and ſoon after gave him a place in the pipe-office, and another in the cuſtoms of ſix hundred pounds a year. Congreve's converſation muſt ſurely have been at leaſt equally pleaſing with his writings.

Such a comedy, written at ſuch an age, requires ſome conſideration. As the lighter ſpecies of dramatick poetry profeſſes the imitation of common life, of real manners, and daily incidents, it apparently preſuppoſes a familiar knowledge of many characters, and

exact obſervation of the paſſing world; the difficulty therefore is, to conceive how this knowledge can be obtained by a boy.

But if the *Old Batchelor* be more nearly examined, it will be found to be one of thoſe comedies which may be made by a mind vigorous and acute, and furniſhed with comick characters by the peruſal of other poets, without much actual commerce with mankind. The dialogue is one conſtant reciprocation of conceits, or claſh of wit, in which nothing flows neceſſarily from the occaſion, or is dictated by nature. The characters both of men and women are either fictitious and artificial, as thoſe of *Heartwell* and the Ladies; or eaſy and common, as *Wittol* a tame idiot, *Bluff* a ſwaggering coward, and *Fondlewife* a jealous puritan; and the cataſtrophe ariſes from a miſtake not very probably produced, by marrying a woman in a maſk.

Yet this gay comedy, when all theſe deductions are made, will ſtill remain the work of a very powerful and fertile mind: the dialogue is quick and ſparkling, the incidents

ſuch as ſeize the attention, and the wit ſo exuberant that it *o'er-informs its tenement.*

Next year he gave another ſpecimen of his abilities in *The Double Dealer*, which was not received with equal kindneſs. He writes to his patron the lord Halifax a dedication, in which he endeavours to reconcile the reader to that which found few friends among the audience. Theſe apologies are always uſeleſs; *de guſtibus non eſt diſputandum*; men may be convinced, but they cannot be pleaſed, againſt their will. But though taſte is obſtinate, it is very variable, and time often prevails when arguments have failed.

Queen Mary conferred upon both thoſe plays the honour of her preſence; and when ſhe died, ſoon after, Congreve teſtified his gratitude by a deſpicable effuſion of elegiac paſtoral; a compoſition in which all is unnatural, and yet nothing is new.

In another year (1695) his prolific pen produced *Love for Love*; a comedy of nearer alliance to life, and exhibiting more real manners, than either of the former. The

character of *Foreſight* was then common. Dryden calculated nativities; both Cromwell and king William had their lucky days; and Shafteſbury himſelf, though he had no religion, was ſaid to regard predictions. The *Sailor* is not accounted very natural, but he is very pleaſant.

With this play was opened the New Theatre, under the direction of Betterton the tragedian; where he exhibited two years afterwards (1697) *The Mourning Bride*, a tragedy, ſo written as to ſhew him ſufficiently qualified for either kind of dramatick poetry.

In this play, of which, when he afterwards reviſed it, he reduced the verſification to greater regularity, there is more buſtle than ſentiment; the plot is buſy and intricate, and the events take hold on the attention; but, except a very few paſſages, we are rather amuſed with noiſe, and perplexed with ſtratagem, than entertained with any true delineation of natural characters. This, however, was received with more benevolence than any other of his works, and ſtill continues to be acted and applauded.

But whatever objections may be made either to his comick or tragick excellence, they are loſt at once in the blaze of admiration, when it is remembered that he had produced theſe four plays before he had paſſed his twenty-fifth year; before other men, even ſuch as are ſome time to ſhine in eminence, have paſſed their probation of literature, or preſume to hope for any other notice than ſuch as is beſtowed on diligence and inquiry. Among all the efforts of early genius which literary hiſtory records, I doubt whether any one can be produced that more ſurpaſſes the common limits of nature than the plays of Congreve.

About this time began the long-continued controverſy between Collier and the poets. In the reign of Charles the Firſt the Puritans had raiſed a violent clamour againſt the drama, which they conſidered as an entertainment not lawful to Chriſtians, an opinion held by them in common with the church of Rome; and Prynne publiſhed *Hiſtrio-maſtix*, a huge volume, in which ſtage-plays were cenſured. The outrages and crimes of the Puritans brought afterwards their whole ſyſ-

tem of doctrine into diſrepute, and from the Reſtoration the poets and the players were left at quiet; for to have moleſted them would have had the appearance of tendency to puritanical malignity.

This danger, however, was worn away by time; and Collier, a fierce and implacable Nonjuror, knew that an attack upon the theatre would never make him ſuſpected for a Puritan; he therefore (1698) publiſhed *A ſhort View of the Immorality and Profaneneſs of the Engliſh Stage*, I believe with no other motive than religious zeal and honeſt indignation. He was formed for a controvertiſt; with ſufficient learning; with diction vehement and pointed, though often vulgar and incorrect; with unconquerable pertinacity; with wit in the higheſt degree keen and ſarcaſtick; and with all thoſe powers exalted and invigorated by juſt confidence in his cauſe.

Thus qualified, and thus incited, he walked out to battle, and aſſailed at once moſt of the living writers, from Dryden to Durfey. His onſet was violent: thoſe paſſages, which

which while they ſtood ſingle had paſſed with little notice, when they were accumulated and expoſed together, excited horror; the wiſe and the pious caught the alarm, and the nation wondered why it had ſo long ſuffered irreligion and licentiouſneſs to be openly taught at the publick charge.

Nothing now remained for the poets but to reſiſt or fly. Dryden's conſcience, or his prudence, angry as he was, withheld him from the conflict; Congreve and Vanbrugh attempted anſwers. Congreve, a very young man, elated with ſucceſs, and impatient of cenſure, aſſumed an air of confidence and ſecurity. His chief artifice of controverſy is to retort upon his adverſary his own words: he is very angry, and, hoping to conquer Collier with his own weapons, allows himſelf in the uſe of every term of contumely and contempt; but he has the ſword without the arm of Scanderbeg; he has his antagoniſt's coarſeneſs, but not his ſtrength. Collier replied; for conteſt was his delight, he was not to be frighted from his purpoſe or his prey.

The cauſe of Congreve was not tenable: whatever gloſſes he might uſe for the defence or palliation of ſingle paſſages, the general tenour and tendency of his plays muſt always be condemned. It is acknowledged, with univerſal conviction, that the peruſal of his works will make no man better; and that their ultimate effect is to repreſent pleaſure in alliance with vice, and to relax thoſe obligations by which life ought to be regulated.

The ſtage found other advocates, and the diſpute was protracted through ten years; but at laſt Comedy grew more modeſt, and Collier lived to ſee the reward of his labour in the reformation of the theatre.

Of the powers by which this important victory was atchieved, a quotation from *Love for Love*, and the remark upon it, may afford a ſpecimen.

Sir Sampſ. *'Sampſon's a very good name; for your Sampſons were ſtrong dogs from the beginning.*

Angel.

Angel. *Have a care—If you remember, the ſtrongeſt Sampſon of your name pull'd an old houſe over his head at laſt.*

" Here you have the Sacred Hiſtory bur-
" leſqued, and Sampſon once more brought
" into the houſe of Dagon, to make ſport
" for the Philiſtines!"

Congreve's laſt play was *The Way of the World*; which, though, as he hints in his dedication, it was written with great labour and much thought, was received with ſo little favour, that, being in a high degree offended and diſguſted, he reſolved to commit his quiet and his fame no more to the caprices of an audience.

From this time his life ceaſed to be pub-lick; he lived for himſelf, and for his friends; and among his friends was able to name every man of his time whom wit and elegance had raiſed to reputation. It may be therefore reaſonably ſuppoſed that his manners were polite, and his converſation pleaſing.

He

He ſeems not to have taken much pleaſure in writing, as he contributed nothing to the *Spectator*, and only one paper to the *Tatler*, though publiſhed by men with whom he might be ſuppoſed willing to aſſociate; and though he lived many years after the publication of his Miſcellaneous Poems, yet he added nothing to them, but lived on in literary indolence; engaged in no controverſy, contending with no rival, neither ſoliciting flattery by publick commendations, nor provoking enmity by malignant criticiſm, but paſſing his time among the great and ſplendid, in the placid enjoyment of his fame and fortune.

Having owed his fortune to Halifax, he continued always of his patron's party, but, as it ſeems, without violence or acrimony; and his firmneſs was naturally eſteemed, as his abilities were reverenced. His ſecurity therefore was never violated; and when, upon the extruſion of the Whigs, ſome interceſſion was uſed leſt Congreve ſhould be diſplaced, the earl of Oxford made this anſwer:

Non

Non obtuſa adeo geſtamus pectora Pœni,
Nec tam averſus equos Tyriâ ſol jungit ab urbe.

He that was thus honoured by the adverſe party, might naturally expect to be advanced when his friends returned to power, and he was made ſecretary for the iſland of Jamaica; a place, I ſuppoſe, without truſt or care, but which, with his poſt in the cuſtoms, is ſaid to have afforded him twelve hundred pounds a year.

His honours were yet far greater than his profits. Every writer mentioned him with reſpect; and, among other teſtimonies to his merit, Steele made him the patron of his Miſcellany, and Pope inſcribed to him his tranſlation of the Iliad.

But he treated the Muſes with ingratitude; for, having long converſed familiarly with the great, he wiſhed to be conſidered rather as a man of faſhion than of wit; and, when he received a viſit from Voltaire, diſguſted him by the deſpicable foppery of deſiring to be conſidered not as an author but a gentleman; to which the Frenchman replied, "that,

"if

" if he had been only a gentleman, he ſhould " not have come to viſit him."

In his retirement he may be ſuppoſed to have applied himſelf to books; for he diſcovers more literature than the poets have commonly attained. But his ſtudies were in his latter days obſtructed by cataracts in his eyes, which at laſt terminated in blindneſs. This melancholy ſtate was aggravated by the gout, for which he ſought relief by a journey to Bath; but being overturned in his chariot, complained from that time of a pain in his ſide, and died, at his houſe in Surry-ſtreet in the Strand, Jan. 29, 1728-9. Having lain in ſtate in the Jeruſalem-chamber, he was buried in Weſtminſter-Abbey, where a monument is erected to his memory by Henrietta dutcheſs of Marlborough, to whom, for reaſons either not known or not mentioned, he bequeathed a legacy of about ten thouſand pounds; the accumulation of attentive parcimony, which, though to her ſuperfluous and uſeleſs, might have given great aſſiſtance to the ancient family from which he deſcended, at that time by the imprudence of his relation reduced to difficulties and diſtreſs.

CONGREVE has merit of the higheſt kind; he is an original writer, who borrowed neither the models of his plot, nor the manner of his dialogue. Of his plays I cannot ſpeak diſtinctly; for ſince I inſpected them many years have paſſed; but what remains upon my memory is, that his characters are commonly fictitious and artificial, with very little of nature, and not much of life. He formed a peculiar idea of comick excellence, which he ſuppoſed to conſiſt in gay remarks and unexpected anſwers; but that which he endeavoured, he ſeldom failed of performing. His ſcenes exhibit not much of humour, imagery, or paſſion: his perſonages are a kind of intellectual gladiators; every ſentence is to ward or ſtrike; the conteſt of ſmartneſs is never intermitted; his wit is a meteor playing to and fro with alternate corruſcations. His comedies have therefore, in ſome degree, the operation of tragedies; they ſurpriſe rather than divert, and raiſe admiration oftener than merriment. But they are the works of a mind replete with images, and quick in combination.

Of

Of his miſcellaneous poetry, I cannot ſay any thing very favourable. The powers of Congreve ſeem to deſert him when he leaves the ſtage, as Antæus was no longer ſtrong than he could touch the ground. It cannot be obſerved without wonder, that a mind ſo vigorous and fertile in dramatick compoſitions ſhould on any other occaſion diſcover nothing but impotence and poverty. He has in theſe little pieces neither elevation of fancy, ſelection of language, nor ſkill in verſification: yet, if I were required to ſelect from the whole maſs of Engliſh poetry the moſt poetical paragraph, I know not what I could prefer to an exclamation in *The Mourning Bride:*

ALMERIA.

It was a fancy'd noiſe; for all is huſh'd.

LEONORA.

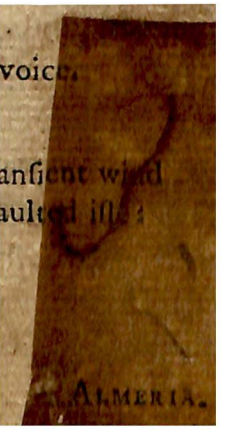
It bore the accent of a human voice.

ALMERIA.

It was thy fear, or elſe ſome tranſient wind
Whiſtling thro' hollows of this vaulted iſle:
We'll liſten—

LEONORA.

Hark!



ALMERIA.

No, all is huſh'd, and ſtill as death.—'Tis dreadful!
How reverend is the face of this tall pile;
Whoſe ancient pillars rear their marble heads,
To bear aloft its arch'd and ponderous roof,
By its own weight made ſtedfaſt and immoveable,
Looking tranquillity! It ſtrikes an awe
And terror on my aching ſight; the tombs
And monumental caves of death look cold,
And ſhoot a chilneſs to my trembling heart.
Give me thy hand, and let me hear thy voice;
Nay, quickly ſpeak to me, and let me hear
Thy voice—my own affrights me with its echoes.

He who reads thoſe lines enjoys for a moment the powers of a poet; he feels what he remembers to have felt before, but he feels it with great increaſe of ſenſibility; he recognizes a familiar image, but meets it again amplified and expanded, embelliſhed with beauty, and enlarged with majeſty.

Yet could the author, who appears here to have enjoyed the confidence of Nature, lament the death of queen Mary in lines like theſe:

The

The rocks are cleft, and new-deſcending rills
Furrow the brows of all th' impending hills.
The water-gods to floods their rivulets turn,
And each, with ſtreaming eyes, ſupplies his wanting urn.
The Fauns forſake the woods, the Nymphs the grove,
And round the plain in ſad diſtractions rove;
In prickly brakes their tender limbs they tear,
And leave on thorns their locks of golden hair.
With their sharp nails, themſelves the Satyrs wound,
And tug their ſhaggy beards, and bite with grief the ground.
Lo Pan himſelf, beneath a blaſted oak,
Dejected lies, his pipe in pieces broke.
See Pales weeping too, in wild deſpair,
And to the piercing winds her boſom bare.
And ſee yon fading myrtle, where appears
The Queen of Love, all bath'd in flowing tears;
See how ſhe wrings her hands, and beats her breaſt,
And tears her uſeleſs girdle from her waiſt.
Hear the ſad murmurs of her ſighing doves!
For grief they ſigh, forgetful of their loves.

And many years after he gave no proof that time had improved his wiſdom or his wit; for on the death of the marquis of Blandford this was his ſong:

And

And now the winds, which had ſo long been ſtill,
Began the ſwelling air with ſighs to fill:
The water-nymphs, who motionleſs remain'd,
Like images of ice, while ſhe complain'd,
Now loos'd their ſtreams: as when deſcending rains
Roll the ſteep torrents headlong o'er the plains.
The prone creation, who ſo long had gaz'd,
Charm'd with her cries, and at her griefs amaz'd,
Began to roar and howl with horrid yell,
Diſmal to hear, and terrible to tell;
Nothing but groans and ſighs were heard around,
And Echo multiplied each mournful ſound.

In both theſe funeral poems, when he has *yelled* out many *ſyllables* of ſenſeleſs *dolour*, he diſmiſſes his reader with ſenſeleſs conſolation: from the grave of Paſtora riſes a light that forms a ſtar; and where Amaryllis wept for Amyntas, from every tear ſprung up a violet.

But William is his hero, and of William he will ſing;

The hov'ring winds on downy wings ſhall wait around,
And catch, and waft to foreign lands, the flying ſound.

It cannot but be proper to ſhew what they ſhall have to catch and carry:

'Twas now, when flowery lawns the proſpect made,
And flowing brooks beneath a foreſt ſhade,
A lowing heifer, loveliеſt of the herd,
Stood feeding by; while two fierce bulls prepar'd,
Their armed heads for fight, by fate of war to prove
The victor worthy of the fair one's love.
Unthought preſage of what met next my view;
For ſoon the ſtately ſcene withdrew.
And now, for woods, and fields, and ſpringing flowers,
Behold a town ariſe, bulwark'd with walls and lofty towers;
Two rival armies all the plain o'erſpread,
Each in battalia rang'd, and ſhining arms array'd;
With eager eyes beholding both from far,
Namur, the prize and miſtreſs of the war.

The *Birth of the Muſe* is a miſerable fiction. One good line it has, which was borrowed from Dryden. The concluding verſes are theſe:

This ſaid, no more remain'd. Th' ætheria holt
Again impatient crowd the cryſtal coaſt.

The

The father, now, within his ſpacious hands,
Encompaſs'd all the mingled maſs of ſeas and lands;
And, having heav'd aloft the ponderous ſphere,
He launch'd the world to float in ambient air.

Of his irregular poems, that to Mrs. Arabella Hunt ſeems to be the beſt: his ode for Cecilia's Day, however, has ſome lines which Pope had in his mind when he wrote his own.

His Imitations of Horace are feebly paraphraſtical, and the additions which he makes are of little value. He ſometimes retains what were more properly omitted, as when he talks of *vervain* and *gums* to propitiate Venus.

Of his Tranſlations, the ſatire of Juvenal was written very early, and may therefore be forgiven, though it have not the maſſyneſs and vigour of the original. In all his verſions ſtrength and ſprightlineſs are wanting: his Hymn to Venus, from Homer, is perhaps the beſt. His lines are weakened with expletives, and his rhymes are frequently imperfect.

His petty poems are ſeldom worth the coſt of criticiſm: ſometimes the thoughts are falſe, and ſometimes common. In his verſes on lady Gethin, the latter part is an imitation of Dryden's ode on Mrs. Killigrew; and Doris, that has been ſo laviſhly flattered by Steele, has indeed ſome lively ſtanzas, but the expreſſion might be mended; and the moſt ſtriking part of the character had been already ſhewn in *Love for Love*. His *Art of Love* is founded on a vulgar but perhaps inſuperable principle, and the ſtaleneſs of the ſenſe is not concealed by any novelty of illuſtration or elegance of diction.

This tiſſue of poetry, from which he ſeems to have hoped a laſting name, is totally neglected, and known only as it is appended to his plays.

While comedy or while tragedy is regarded, his plays are likely to be read; but, except what relates to the ſtage, I know not that he has ever written a ſtanza that is ſung, or a couplet that is quoted. The general character of his Miſcellanies is, that they ſhew little wit, and little virtue.



Yet

Yet to him it muſt be confeſſed that we are indebted for the correction of a national error, and the cure of our Pindarick madneſs. He firſt taught the Engliſh writers that Pindar's odes were regular; and though certainly he had not the fire requiſite for the higher ſpecies of lyrick poetry, he has ſhewn us that enthuſiaſm has its rules, and that in mere confuſion there is neither grace nor greatneſs.

# BLACKMORE.

# BLACKMORE.

SIR RICHARD BLACKMORE is one of thoſe men whoſe writings have attracted much notice, but of whoſe life and manners very little has been communicated, and whoſe lot it has been to be much oftener mentioned by enemies than by friends.

He was the ſon of Robert Blackmore of Corſham in Wiltſhire, ſtyled by Wood *Gentleman*, and ſuppoſed to have been an attorney: having been for ſome time educated in a country-ſchool, he was ſent at thirteen to Weſtminſter; and in 1668 was entered at Edmund-Hall in Oxford, where he took the degree of M. A. June 3, 1676, and reſided thirteen years; a much longer time than it is uſual to ſpend at the univerſity. He afterwards travelled: at Padua he was made doctor of phyſic; and, after having wandered about a year

a year and a half on the Continent, returned home.

In ſome part of his life, it is not known when, his indigence compelled him to teach a ſchool; an humiliation with which, though it certainly laſted but a little while, his enemies did not forget to reproach him, when he became conſpicuous enough to excite malevolence; and let it be remembered for his honour, that to have been once a ſchool-maſter is the only reproach which all the perſpicacity of malice, animated by wit, has ever fixed upon his private life.

When he firſt engaged in the ſtudy of phyſic, he enquired, as he ſays, of Dr. Sydenham what authors he ſhould read, and was directed by Sydenham to Don Quixote; *which*, ſaid he, *is a very good book; I read it ſtill.* The perverſeneſs of mankind makes it often miſchievous in men of eminence to give way to merriment. The idle and the illiterate will long ſhelter themſelves under this fooliſh apophthegm.

Whether

Whether he reſted ſatisfied with this direction, or ſought for better, he commenced phyſician, and obtained high eminence and extenſive practice. He became Fellow of the College of Phyſicians April 12, 1687, being one of the thirty which, by the new charter of king James, were added to the former Fellows. His reſidence was in Cheapſide, and his friends were chiefly in the city. In the early part of Blackmore's time, a citizen was a term of reproach; and his place of abode was another topick to which his adverſaries had recourſe, in the penury of ſcandal.

Blackmore therefore was made a poet not by neceſſity but inclination, and wrote not for a livelihood but for a fame; or, if he may tell his own motives, for a nobler purpoſe, to engage poetry in the cauſe of Virtue.

I believe it is peculiar to him, that his firſt publick work was an heroick poem. He was not known as a maker of verſes, till he publiſhed (in 1699) *Prince Arthur*, in ten books, written, as he relates, *by ſuch catches and ſtarts, and in ſuch occaſional uncertain hours as*

*as his profeſſion afforded, and for the greateſt part in coffee-houſes, or in paſſing up and down the ſtreets.* For the latter part of this apology he was accuſed of writing *to the rumbling of his chariot-wheels.* He had read, he ſays, *but little poetry throughout his whole life; and for fifteen years before had not written an hundred verſes, except one copy of Latin verſes in praiſe of a friend's book.*

He thinks, and with ſome reaſon, that from ſuch a performance perfection cannot be expected; but he finds another reaſon for the ſeverity of his cenſurers, which he expreſſes in language ſuch as Cheapſide eaſily furniſhed. *I am not free of the Poets Company, having never kiſſed the governor's hands: mine is therefore not ſo much as a permiſſion-poem, but a downright interloper. Thoſe gentlemen who carry on their poetical trade in a joint ſtock, would certainly do what they could to ſink and ruin an unlicenſed adventurer, notwithſtanding I diſturbed none of their factories, nor imported any goods they had ever dealt in.* He had lived in the city till he had learned its note.

That *Prince Arthur* found many readers, is certain; for in two years it had three editions; a very uncommon inſtance of favourable reception, at a time when literary curioſity was yet confined to particular claſſes of the nation. Such ſucceſs naturally raiſed animoſity; and Dennis attacked it by a formal criticiſm, more tedious and diſguſting than the work which he condemns. To this cenſure may be oppoſed the approbation of Locke and the admiration of Molineux, which are found in their printed Letters. Molineux is particularly delighted with the ſong of *Mopſus*, which is therefore ſubjoined to this narrative.

It is remarked by Pope, that what *raiſes the hero often ſinks the man.* Of Blackmore it may be ſaid, that as the poet ſinks, the man riſes; the animadverſions of Dennis, inſolent and contemptuous as they were, raiſed in him no implacable reſentment: he and his critick were afterwards friends; and in one of his latter works he praiſes Dennis as *equal to Boileau in poetry, and ſuperior to him in critical abilities.*

He

He ſeems to have been more delighted with praiſe than pained by cenſure, and, inſtead of ſlackening, quickened his career. Having in two years produced ten books of *Prince Arthur*, in two years more (1697) he ſent into the world *King Arthur* in twelve. The provocation was now doubled, and the reſentment of wits and critics may be ſuppoſed to have increaſed in proportion. He found, however, advantages more than equivalent to all their outrages; he was this year made one of the phyſicians in ordinary to king William, and advanced by him to the honour of knighthood, with a preſent of a gold chain and a medal.

The malignity of the wits attributed his knighthood to his new poem; but king William was not very ſtudious of poetry, and Blackmore perhaps had other merit: for he ſays in his Dedication to *Alfred*, that *he had a greater part in the ſucceſſion of the houſe of Hanover than ever he had boaſted.*

What Blackmore could contribute to the Succeſſion, or what he imagined himſelf to have contributed, cannot now be known.

That he had been of conſiderable uſe, I doubt not but he believed, for I hold him to have been very honeſt; but he might eaſily make a falſe eſtimate of his own importance: thoſe whom their virtue reſtrains from deceiving others, are often diſpoſed by their vanity to deceive themſelves. Whether he promoted the Succeſſion or not, he at leaſt approved it, and adhered invariably to his principles and party through his whole life.

His ardour of poetry ſtill continued; and not long after (1700) he publiſhed a *Paraphraſe on the Book of Job*, and other parts of the Scripture. This performance Dryden, who purſued him with great malignity, lived long enough to ridicule in a Prologue.

The wits eaſily confederated againſt him, as Dryden, whoſe favour they almoſt all courted, was his profeſſed adverſary. He had beſides given them reaſon for reſentment, as, in his Preface to *Prince Arthur*, he had ſaid of the Dramatick Writers almoſt all that was alleged afterwards by Collier; but Blackmore's cenſure was cold and general,

Collier's

Collier's was perſonal and ardent; Blackmore taught his reader to diſlike, what Collier incited him to abhor.

In his Preface to *King Arthur* he endeavoured to gain at leaſt one friend, and propitiated Congreve by higher praiſe of his *Mourning Bride* than it has obtained from any other critick.

The ſame year he publiſhed a *Satire on Wit*, a proclamation of defiance which united the poets almoſt all againſt him, and which brought upon him lampoons and ridicule from every ſide. This he doubtleſs foreſaw, and evidently deſpiſed; nor ſhould his dignity of mind be without its praiſe, had he not paid the homage to greatneſs which he denied to genius, and degraded himſelf by conferring that authority over the national taſte, which he takes from the poets, upon men of high rank and wide influence, but of leſs wit, and not greater virtue.

Here is again diſcovered the inhabitant of Cheapſide, whoſe head cannot keep his poetry unmingled with trade. To hinder that intellectual

tellectual bankruptcy which he affects to fear, he will erect a *Bank for Wit*.

In this poem he juſtly cenſured Dryden's impurities, but praiſed his powers; though in a ſubſequent edition he retained the ſatire and omitted the praiſe. What was his reaſon I know not; Dryden was then no longer in his way.

His head ſtill teemed with heroick poetry, and (1705) he publiſhed *Eliza* in ten books. I am afraid that the world was now weary of contending about Blackmore's heroes; for I do not remember that by any author, ſerious or comical, I have found *Eliza* either praiſed or blamed. She *dropped*, as it ſeems, *dead-born from the preſs*. It is never mentioned, and was never ſeen by me till I borrowed it for the preſent occaſion. Jacob ſays, *it is corrected, and reviſed for another impreſſion*; but the labour of reviſion was thrown away.

From this time he turned ſome of his thoughts to the celebration of living characters, and wrote a poem on the *Kit-cat Club*,

and *Advice to the Poets how to celebrate the Duke of Marlborough*; but on occaſion of another year of ſucceſs, thinking himſelf qualified to give more inſtruction, he again wrote a poem of *Advice to a Weaver of Tapeſtry*. Steele was then publiſhing the *Taller*; and looking round him for ſomething at which he might laugh, unluckily lighted on Sir Richard's work, and treated it with ſuch contempt, that, as Fenton obſerves, he put an end to the ſpecies of writers that gave *Advice to Painters*.

Not long after (1712) he publiſhed *Creation, a philoſophical Poem*, which has been, by my recommendation, inſerted in the late collection. Whoever judges of this by any other of Blackmore's performances, will do it injury. The praiſe given it by Addiſon *(Spec. 339)* is too well known to be tranſcribed; but ſome notice is due to the teſtimony of Dennis, who calls it a "philoſo-"phical Poem, which has equalled that of "Lucretius in the beauty of its verſification, "and infinitely ſurpaſſed it in the ſolidity "and ſtrength of its reaſoning.

Why

Why an author ſurpaſſes himſelf, it is natural to enquire. I have heard from Mr. Draper, an eminent bookſeller, an account received by him from Ambroſe Philips, "That "Blackmore, as he proceeded in this poem, "laid his manuſcript from time to time be-"fore a club of wits with whom he aſſociated; "and that every man contributed, as he "could, either improvement or correction; "ſo that," ſaid Philips, "there are perhaps "no where in the book thirty lines together, "that now ſtand as they were originally "written."

The relation of Philips, I ſuppoſe, was true; but when all reaſonable, all credible allowance is made for this friendly reviſion, the author will ſtill retain an ample dividend of praiſe; for to him muſt always be aſſigned the plan of the work, the diſtribution of its parts, the choice of topicks, the train of argument, and, what is yet more, the general predominance of philoſophical judgement and poetical ſpirit. Correction ſeldom effects more than the ſuppreſſion of faults: a happy line, or a ſingle elegance, may perhaps be added: but of a large work the general cha-

racter muſt always remain; the original conſtitution can be very little helped by local remedies; inherent and radical dullneſs will never be much invigorated by extrinſic animation.

This poem, if he had written nothing elſe, would have tranſmitted him to poſterity among the firſt favourites of the Engliſh Muſe; but to make verſes was his tranſcendent pleaſure, and as he was not deterred by cenſure, he was not fatigated with praiſe.

He deviated, however, ſometimes into other tracks of literature, and condeſcended to entertain his readers with plain proſe. When the *Spectator* ſtopped, he conſidered the polite world as deſtitute of entertainment; and in concert with Mr. Hughes, who wrote every third paper, publiſhed three times a week the *Lay Monaſtery*, founded on the ſuppoſition that ſome literary men, whoſe characters are deſcribed, had retired to a houſe in the country to enjoy philoſophical leiſure, and reſolved to inſtruct the public, by communicating their diſquiſitions and amuſements. Whether any real perſons were concealed under fictitious names

names, is not known. The hero of the club is one Mr. Johnſon; ſuch a conſtellation of excellence, that his character ſhall not be ſuppreſſed, though there is no great genius in the deſign, nor ſkill in the delineation.

" The firſt I ſhall name is Mr. Johnſon, a " *gentleman that owes to* Nature excellent " faculties and an elevated genius, and to in- " duſtry and application many acquired ac- " compliſhments. His taſte is diſtinguiſhing, " juſt and delicate; his judgement clear, and " his reaſon ſtrong, accompanied with an " imagination full of ſpirit, of great compaſs, " and ſtored with refined ideas. He is a " critic of the firſt rank; and, what is his " peculiar ornament, he is delivered from the " oſtentation, malevolence, and ſupercilious " temper, that ſo often blemiſh men of that " character. His remarks reſult from the " nature and reaſon of things, and are formed " by a judgement free, and unbiaſſed by the " authority of thoſe who have lazily followed " each other in the ſame beaten track of think- " ing, and are arrived only at the reputation of " acute grammarians and commentators; " men, who have been copying one another

" many hundred years, without any improve-
" ment; or, if they have ventured farther,
" have only applied in a mechanical manner
" the rules of antient critics to modern writ-
" ings, and with great labour discovered no-
" thing but their own want of judgment and
" capacity. As Mr. Johnson penetrates to
" the bottom of his subject, by which means
" his observations are solid and natural, as
" well as delicate, so his design is always to
" bring to light something useful and orna-
" mental; whence his character is the reverse
" to theirs, who have eminent abilities in in-
" significant knowledge, and a great felicity in
" finding out trifles. He is no less industri-
" ous to search out the merit of an author,
" than sagacious in discerning his errors and
" defects; and takes more pleasure in com-
" mending the beauties than exposing the
" blemishes of a laudable writing: like Ho-
" race, in a long work, he can bear some de-
" formities, and justly lay them on the im-
" perfection of human nature, which is inca-
" pable of faultless productions. When an
" excellent *Drama* appears in public, and by
" its intrinsic worth attracts a general applause,
" he is not stung with envy and spleen; nor
" does

" does he expreſs a ſavage nature, in faſtening
" upon the celebrated author, dwelling upon
" his imaginary defects, and paſſing over his
" conſpicuous excellences. He treats all
" writers upon the ſame impartial foot; and
" is not, like the little critics, taken up entirely
" in finding out only the beauties of the an-
" cient, and nothing but the errors of the mo-
" dern writers. Never did any one expreſs more
" kindneſs and good nature to young and unfi-
" niſhed authors; he promotes their intereſts,
" protects their reputation, extenuates their
" faults, and ſets off their virtues, and by his can-
" dour guards them from the ſeverity of his
" judgement. He is not like thoſe dry critics,
" who are moroſe becauſe they cannot write
" themſelves, but is himſelf maſter of a good vein
" in poetry; and though he does not often em-
" ploy it, yet he has ſometimes entertained
" his friends with his unpubliſhed perform-
" ances."

The reſt of the *Lay Monks* ſeem to be but feeble mortals, in compariſon with the gigantic Johnſon; who yet, with all his abilities, and the help of the fraternity, could drive the publication but to forty papers, which were

afterwards collected into a volume, and called in the title a *Sequel to the Spectators*.

Some years afterwards (1716 and 1717) he publiſhed two volumes of Eſſays in proſe, which can be commended only as they are written for the higheſt and nobleſt purpoſe, the promotion of religion. Blackmore's proſe is not the proſe of a poet; for it is languid, ſluggiſh, and lifeleſs; his diction is neither daring nor exact, his flow neither rapid nor eaſy, and his periods neither ſmooth nor ſtrong. His account of *Wit* will ſhew with how little clearneſs he is content to think, and how little his thoughts are recommended by his language.

"As to its efficient cauſe, *Wit* owes its pro-
" duction to an extraordinary and peculiar
" temperament in the conſtitution of the poſ-
" ſeſſor of it, in which is found a concur-
" rence of regular and exalted ferments, and
" an affluence of animal ſpirits, refined and
" rectified to a great degree of purity; whence,
" being endowed with vivacity, brightneſs,
" and celerity, as well in their reflexions
" as direct motions, they become proper in-
" ſtruments

" ſtruments for the ſpritely operations of the
" mind; by which means the imagination can
" with great facility range the wide field of
" Nature, contemplate an infinite variety of
" objects, and, by obſerving the ſimilitude and
" diſagreement of their ſeveral qualities, ſingle
" out and abſtract, and then ſuit and unite
" thoſe ideas which will beſt ſerve its purpoſe.
" Hence beautiful alluſions, ſurpriſing meta-
" phors, and admirable ſentiments, are always
" ready at hand: and while the fancy is full
" of images collected from innumerable ob-
" jects and their different qualities, relations,
" and habitudes, it can at pleaſure dreſs a
" common notion in a ſtrange but becoming
" garb; by which, as before obſerved, the
" ſame thought will appear a new one,
" to the great delight and wonder of the hear-
" er. What we call *genius* reſults from this
" particular happy complexion in the firſt
" formation of the perſon that enjoys it, and
" is Nature's gift, but diverſified by various
" ſpecific characters and limitations, as its
" active fire is blended and allayed by differ-
" ent proportions of phlegm, or reduced and
" regulated by the contraſt of oppoſite fer-
" ments. Therefore, as there happens in the
" com-

" compoſition of a facetious genius a greater
" or leſs, though ſtill an inferior, degree of
" judgement and prudence, one man of wit
" will be varied and diſtinguiſhed from ano-
" ther."

In theſe Eſſays he took little care to propitiate the wits; for he ſcorns to avert their malice at the expence of virtue or of truth.

" Several, in their books, have many ſar-
" caſtical and ſpiteful ſtrokes at religion in
" general; while others make themſelves plea-
" ſant with the principles of the Chriſtian.
" Of the laſt kind, this age has ſeen a moſt
" audacious example in the book intituled,
" *A Tale of a Tub.* Had this writing been
" publiſhed in a pagan or popiſh nation, who
" are juſtly impatient of all indignity offered
" to the eſtabliſhed religion of their country,
" no doubt but the author would have received
" the puniſhment he deſerved. But the fate
" of this impious buffoon is very different;
" for in a proteſtant kingdom, zealous of their
" civil and religious immunities, he has not
" only eſcaped affronts and the effects of pub-
" lic reſentment, but has been careſſed and
" patronized by perſons of great figure, and

" of

" of all denominations. Violent party-men,
" who differed in all things beſides, agreed in
" their turn to ſhew particular reſpect and
" friendſhip to this inſolent derider of the
" worſhip of his country, till at laſt the re-
" puted writer is not only gone off with im-
" punity, but triumphs in his dignity and pre-
" ferment. I do not know that any inquiry
" or ſearch was ever made after this writing,
" or that any reward was ever offered for
" the diſcovery of the author, or that the in-
" famous book was ever condemned to be
" burnt in public: whether this proceeds
" from the exceſſive eſteem and love that
" men in power, during the late reign, had for
" wit, or their defect of zeal and concern for
" the Chriſtian Religion, will be determined
" beſt by thoſe who are beſt acquainted with
" their character."

In another place he ſpeaks with becoming abhorrence of a *godleſs author* who has burleſqued a Pſalm. This author was ſuppoſed to be Pope, who publiſhed a reward for any one that would produce the coiner of the accuſation, but never denied it; and was after-

wards the perpetual and inceſſant enemy of Blackmore.

One of his Eſſays is upon the Spleen, which is treated by him ſo much to his own ſatisfaction, that he has publiſhed the ſame thoughts in the ſame words; firſt in the *Lay Monaſtery*; then in the Eſſay; and then in the Preface to a Medical Treatiſe on the Spleen. One paſſage, which I have found already twice, I will here exhibit, becauſe I think it better imagined, and better expreſſed, than could be expected from the common tenour of his proſe:

"—As the ſeveral combinations of ſplene-
" tic madneſs and folly produce an infinite
" variety of irregular underſtanding, ſo the
" amicable accommodation and alliance be-
" tween ſeveral virtues and vices produce an
" equal diverſity in the diſpoſitions and man-
" ners of mankind; whence it comes to paſs,
" that as many monſtrous and abſurd pro-
" ductions are found in the moral as in the in-
" tellectual world. How ſurpriſing is it to
" obſerve among the leaſt culpable men ſome
" whoſe minds are attracted by heaven and
" earth, with a ſeeming equal force; ſome

" who

" who are proud of humility; others who are
" cenſorious and uncharitable, yet ſelf-deny-
" ing and devout; ſome who join contempt
" of the world with ſordid avarice; and others,
" who preſerve a great degree of piety, with
" ill-nature and ungoverned paſſions: nor are
" inſtances of this inconſiſtent mixture leſs
" frequent among bad men, where we often,
" with admiration, ſee perſons at once gene-
" rous and unjuſt, impious lovers of their
" country, and flagitious heroes, good-natured
" ſharpers, immoral men of honour, and li-
" bertines who will ſooner die than change
" their religion; and though it is true that
" repugnant coalitions of ſo high a degree
" are found but in a part of mankind, yet
" none of the whole maſs, either good or
" bad, are intirely exempted from ſome ab-
" ſurd mixture."

He about this time (Aug. 22, 1716) became one of the *Elects* of the College of Phyſicians; and was ſoon after (Oct. 1) choſen *Cenſor*. He ſeems to have arrived late, whatever was the reaſon, at his medical honours.

Having ſucceeded ſo well in his book on *Creation*, by which he eſtabliſhed the great

principle of all Religion, he thought his undertaking imperfect, unleſs he likewiſe enforced the truth of Revelation; and for that purpoſe added another poem on *Redemption*. He likewiſe wrote, before his *Creation*, three books on the *Nature of Man*.

The lovers of muſical devotion have always wiſhed for a more happy metrical verſion than they have yet obtained of the book of Pſalms; this wiſh the piety of Blackmore led him to gratify, and he produced (1721) *a new Verſion of the Pſalms of* David, *fitted to the tunes uſed in Churches*; which, being recommended by the archbiſhops and many biſhops, obtained a licenſe for its admiſſion into public worſhip; but no admiſſion has it yet obtained, nor has it any right to come where Brady and Tate have got poſſeſſion. Blackmore's name muſt be added to thoſe of many others, who, by the ſame attempt, have obtained only the praiſe of meaning well.

He was not yet deterred from heroick poetry; there was another monarch of this iſland, for he did not fetch his heroes from foreign countries, whom he conſidered as worthy of the Epic

Epic Muſe, and he dignified Alfred (1723) with twelve books. But the opinion of the nation was now ſettled; a hero introduced by Blackmore was not likely to find either reſpect or kindneſs; *Alfred* took his place by *Eliza* in ſilence and darkneſs: benevolence was aſhamed to favour, and malice was weary of inſulting. Of his four Epic Poems, the firſt had ſuch reputation and popularity as enraged the critics; the ſecond was at leaſt known enough to be ridiculed; the two laſt had neither friends nor enemies.

Contempt is a kind of gangrene, which if it ſeizes one part of a character corrupts all the reſt by degrees. Blackmore, being deſpiſed as a poet, was in time neglected as a phyſician; his practice, which was once invidiouſly great, forſook him in the latter part of his life; but being by nature, or by principle, averſe from idleneſs, he employed his unwelcome leiſure in writing books on phyſic, and teaching others to cure thoſe whom he could himſelf cure no longer. I know not whether I can enumerate all the treatiſes by which he has endeavoured to diffuſe the art of healing; for there is ſcarcely any diſtemper, of dread-

ful

ful name, which he has not taught his reader how to oppoſe. He has written on the ſmall-pox, with a vehement invective againſt inoculation; on conſumptions, the ſpleen, the gout, the rheumatiſm, the king's-evil, the dropſy, the jaundice, the ſtone, the diabetes, and the plague.

Of thoſe books, if I had read them, it could not be expected that I ſhould be able to give a critical account. I have been told that there is ſomething in them of vexation and diſcontent, diſcovered by a perpetual attempt to degrade phyſick from its ſublimity, and to repreſent it as attainable without much previous or concomitant learning. By the tranſient glances which I have thrown upon them, I have obſerved an affected contempt of the Ancients, and a ſupercilious deriſion of tranſmitted knowledge. Of this indecent arrogance the following quotation from his Preface to the Treatiſe on the Small-pox will afford a ſpecimen; in which, when the reader finds, what I fear is true, that when he was cenſuring Hippocrates he did not know the difference between *aphoriſm* and *apophthegm*, he will not pay much regard to his determinations concerning ancient learning.

"As

" As for this book of Aphoriſms, it is " like my lord Bacon's of the ſame title, a " book of jeſts, or a grave collection of trite " and trifling obſervations; of which though " many are true and certain, yet they ſignify " nothing, and may afford diverſion, but no " inſtruction; moſt of them being much in- " ferior to the ſayings of the wiſe men of " Greece, which yet are ſo low and mean, " that we are entertained every day with " more valuable ſentiments at the table-con- " verſation of ingenious and learned men."

I am unwilling however to leave him in total diſgrace, and will therefore quote from another Preface a paſſage leſs reprehenſible.

" Some gentlemen have been diſingenuous " and unjuſt to me, by wreſting and forcing " my meaning in the Preface to another book, " as if I condemned and expoſed all learning, " though they knew I declared that I greatly " honoured and eſteemed all men of ſuperior " literature and erudition; and that I only " undervalued falſe or ſuperficial learning, " that ſignifies nothing for the ſervice of

" mankind; and that, as to phyſick, I ex-
" preſsly affirmed that learning muſt be joined
" with native genius to make a phyſician of
" the firſt rank; but if thoſe talents are ſepa-
" rated, I aſſerted, and do ſtill inſiſt, that a
" man of native ſagacity and diligence will
" prove a more able and uſeful practiſer,
" than a heavy notional ſcholar, encumbered
" with a heap of confuſed ideas."

He was not only a poet and a phyſician, but produced likewiſe a work of a different kind, *A Hiſtorical Hiſtory of the Conſpiracy against King William, of glorious Memory, in the Year 1695.* This I have never ſeen, but ſuppoſe it at leaſt compiled with integrity. He engaged likewiſe in theological controverſy, and wrote two books againſt the Arians; *Juſt Prejudices againſt the* Arian *Hypotheſis*; and *Modern* Arians *unmaſked.* Another of his works is *Natural Theology, or Moral Duties conſidered apart from Poſitive; with ſome Obſervations on the Deſirableneſs and Neceſſity of a ſupernatural Revelation.* This was the laſt book that he publiſhed. He left behind him *The accompliſhed Preacher, or an Eſſay*

*Eſſay upon Divine Eloquence*; which was printed after his death by Mr. White of Nayland in Eſſex, the miniſter who attended his deathbed, and teſtified the fervent piety of his laſt hours. He died on the eighth of October, 1729.

BLACKMORE, by the unremitted enmity of the wits, whom he provoked more by his virtue than his dulneſs, has been expoſed to worſe treatment than he deſerved; his name was ſo long uſed to point every epigram upon dull writers, that it became at laſt a bye-word of contempt: but it deſerves obſervation, that malignity takes hold only of his writings, and that his life paſſed without reproach, even when his boldneſs of reprehenſion [illegible] upon him many eyes deſirous to [illegible] faults, which many tongues would have made haſte to publiſh. But thoſe who could not blame, could at leaſt forbear to praiſe, and therefore of his private life and domeſtick character there are no memorials.

As an author he may juſtly claim the honours of magnanimity. The inceſſant attacks of his enemies, whether ſerious or merry, are never diſcovered to have diſturbed his quiet, or to have leſſened his confidence in himſelf; they neither awed him to ſilence nor to caution; they neither provoked him

to

to petulance, nor depreſſed him to complaint. While the diſtributors of literary fame were endeavouring to depreciate and degrade him, he either deſpiſed or defied them, wrote on as he had written before, and never turned aſide to quiet them by civility, or repreſs them by confutation.

He depended with great ſecurity on his own powers, and perhaps was for that reaſon leſs diligent in peruſing books. His literature was, I think, but ſmall. What he knew of antiquity, I ſuſpect him to have gathered from modern compilers: but though he could not boaſt of much critical knowledge, his mind was ſtored with general principles, and he left minute reſearches to thoſe whom he conſidered as little minds.

With this diſpoſition he wrote moſt of his poems. Having formed a magnificent deſign, he was careleſs of particular and ſubordinate elegancies; he ſtudied no niceties of verſification; he waited for no felicities of fancy; but caught his firſt thoughts in the firſt words in which they were preſented: nor does it appear that he ſaw beyond his own perform-

 ances,

26673

ances, or had ever elevated his views to that ideal perfection which every genius born to excel is condemned always to purſue, and never overtake. In the firſt ſuggeſtions of his imagination he acquieſced; he thought them good, and did not ſeek for better.

The poem on *Creation* has, however, the appearance of more circumſpection; it wants neither harmony of numbers, accuracy of thought, nor elegance of diction: it has either been written with great care, or, what cannot be imagined of ſo long a work, with ſuch felicity as made care leſs neceſſary.

Its two conſtituent parts are ratiocination and deſcription. To reaſon in verſe, is allowed to be difficult; but Blackmore not only reaſons in verſe, but very often reaſons poetically; and finds the art of uniting ornament with ſtrength, and eaſe with cloſeneſs. This is a ſkill which Pope might have condeſcended to learn from him, when he needed it ſo much in his Moral Eſſays.

In his deſcriptions, both of life and nature, the poet and the philoſopher happily co-operate;

rate; truth is recommended by elegance, and elegance ſuſtained by truth.

In the ſtructure and order of the poem, not only the greater parts are properly conſecutive, but the didactick and illuſtrative paragraphs are ſo happily mingled, that labour is relieved by pleaſure, and the attention is led on through a long ſucceſſion of varied excellence to the original poſition, the fundamental principle of wiſdom and of virtue.

AS the heroick poems of Blackmore are now little read, it is thought proper to inſert, as a ſpecimen from *Prince Arthur*, the ſong of *Mopas* mentioned by Molineux.

But that which Arthur with moſt pleaſure heard,
Were noble ſtrains, by Mopas ſung the bard,
Who to his harp in lofty verſe began,
And through the ſecret maze of Nature ran.
He the great Spirit ſung, that all things fill'd,
That the tumultuous waves of Chaos ſtill'd;
Whoſe nod diſpos'd the jarring ſeeds to peace,
And made the wars of hoſtile Atoms ceaſe.
All Beings we in fruitful Nature find,
Proceeded from the great Eternal Mind;
Streams of his unexhauſted ſpring of power,
And cheriſh'd with his influence, endure.
He ſpread the pure cerulean fields on high,
And arch'd the chambers of the vaulted ſky,
Which he, to ſuit their glory with their height,
Adorn'd with globes, that reel, as drunk with light.
His hand directed all the tuneful ſpheres,
He turn'd their orbs, and poliſh'd all the ſtars.
He fill'd the Sun's vaſt lamp with golden light,
And bid the ſilver Moon adorn the night.

He

He ſpread the airy Ocean without ſhores,
Where birds are wafted with their feather'd oars.
Then ſung the bard how the light vapours riſe
From the warm earth, and cloud the ſmiling ſkies.
He ſung how ſome, chill'd in their airy flight,
Fall ſcatter'd down in pearly dew by night.
How ſome, rais'd higher, ſit in ſecret ſteams
On the reflected points of bounding beams;
Till, chill'd with cold, they ſhade th' etherial plain,
Then on the thirſty earth deſcend in rain.
How ſome, whoſe parts a ſlight contexture ſhow,
Sink hovering through the air, in fleecy ſnow.
How part is ſpun in ſilken threads, and clings
Entangled in the graſs in glewy ſtrings.
How others ſtamp to ſtones, with ruſhing ſound
Fall from their cryſtal quarries to the ground.
How ſome are laid in trains, that kindled fly
In harmleſs fires by night, about the ſky.
How ſome in winds blow with impetuous force,
And carry ruin where they bend their courſe:
While ſome conſpire to form a gentle breeze,
To fan the air, and play among the trees.
How ſome, enrag'd, grow turbulent and loud,
Pent in the bowels of a frowning cloud;
That cracks, as if the axis of the world
Was broke, and heaven's bright towers were
downwards hurl'd.
He ſung how earth's wide ball, at Jove's command,
Did in the midſt on airy columns ſtand.
And how the ſoul of plants, in priſon held,
And bound with ſluggiſh fetters, lies conceal'd,

Till

Till with the Spring's warm beams, almoſt releaſt
From the dull weight, with which it lay oppreſt,
Its vigour ſpreads, and makes the teeming earth
Heave up, and labour with the ſprouting birth:
The active ſpirit freedom ſeeks in vain,
It only works and twiſts a ſtronger chain.
Urging its priſon's ſides to break a way,
It makes that wider, where 'tis forc'd to ſtay:
Till, having form'd its living houſe, it rears
Its head, and in a tender plant appears.
Hence ſprings the oak, the beauty of the grove,
Whoſe ſtately trunk fierce ſtorms can ſcarcely move:
Hence grows the cedar, hence the ſwelling vine
Does round the elm its purple cluſters twine.
Hence painted flowers the ſmiling gardens bleſs,
Both with their fragrant ſcent and gaudy dreſs.
Hence the white lily in full beauty grows,
Hence the blue violet, and bluſhing roſe.
He ſung how ſun-beams brood upon the earth,
And in the glebe hatch ſuch a numerous birth;
Which way the genial warmth in Summer ſtorms
Turns putrid vapours to a bed of worms;
How rain, transform'd by this prolifick power,
Falls from the clouds an animated ſhower.
He ſung the embryo's growth within the womb,
And how the parts their various ſhapes aſſume.
With what rare art the wondrous ſtructure's wrought,
From one crude maſs to ſuch perfection brought;
That no part uſeleſs, none miſplac'd we ſee,
None are forgot, and more would monſtrous be."

# FENTON.

# FENTON.

THE brevity with which I am to write the account of ELISHA FENTON is not the effect of indifference or negligence. I have ſought intelligence among his relations in his native county, but have not obtained it.

He was born near Newcaſtle in Staffordſhire, of an ancient family, whoſe eſtate was very conſiderable; but he was the youngeſt of twelve children, and being therefore neceſſarily deſtined to ſome lucrative employment, was ſent firſt to ſchool, and afterwards to Cambridge; but, with many other wiſe and virtuous men, who at that time of diſcord and debate conſulted conſcience, whether well or ill informed, more than intereſt, he doubted the legality of the government, and, refuſing to qualify himſelf for publick employment by the oaths required, left the univerſity without a degree;

gree; but I never heard that the enthusiasm of oppoſition impelled him to ſeparation from the church.

By this perverſeneſs of integrity he was driven out a commoner of Nature, excluded from the regular modes of profit and proſperity, and reduced to pick up a livelihood uncertain and fortuitous; but it muſt be remembered that he kept his name unſullied, and never ſuffered himſelf to be reduced, like too many of the ſame ſect, to mean arts and diſhonourable ſhifts. Whoever mentioned Fenton, mentioned him with honour.

The life that paſſes in penury, muſt neceſſarily paſs in obſcurity. It is impoſſible to trace Fenton from year to year, or to diſcover what means he uſed for his ſupport. He was a while ſecretary to Charles earl of Orrery in Flanders, and tutor to his young ſon, who afterwards mentioned him with great eſteem and tenderneſs. He was at one time aſſiſtant in the ſchool of Mr. Bonwicke in Surrey; and at another kept a ſchool for himſelf at Sevenoaks in Kent, which he brought into reputation; but was perſuaded to

to leave it (1710) by Mr. St. John, with promiſes of a more honourable employment.

His opinions, as he was a Nonjuror, ſeem not to have been remarkably rigid. He wrote with great zeal and affection the praiſes of queen Anne, and very willingly and liberally extolled the duke of Marlborough, when he was (1707) at the height of his glory.

He expreſſed ſtill more attention to Marlborough and his family by an elegiac Paſtoral on the marquis of Blandford, which could be prompted only by reſpect or kindneſs; for neither the duke nor dutcheſs deſired the praiſe, or liked the coſt of patronage.

The elegance of his poetry entitled him to the company of the wits of his time, and the amiableneſs of his manners made him loved wherever he was known. Of his friendſhip to Southern and Pope there are laſting monuments. He publiſhed in 1707 a collection of poems.

By Pope he was once placed in a ſtation that might have been of great advantage.

Craggs, when he was advanced to be ſecretary of ſtate (about 1720), feeling his own want of literature, deſired Pope to procure him an inſtructor, by whoſe help he might ſupply the deficiencies of his education. Pope recommended Fenton, in whom Craggs found all that he was ſeeking. There was now a proſpect of eaſe and plenty; for Fenton had merit, and Craggs had generoſity: but the ſmall-pox ſuddenly put an end to the pleaſing expectation.

When Pope, after the great ſucceſs of his *Iliad*, undertook the *Odyſſey*, being, as it ſeems, weary of tranſlating, he determined to engage auxiliaries. Twelve books he took to himſelf, and twelve he diſtributed between Broome and Fenton: the books allotted to Fenton were the firſt, the fourth, the nineteenth, and the twentieth. It is obſervable that he did not take the eleventh, which he had before tranſlated into blank verſe, neither did Pope claim it, but committed it to Broome. How the two aſſociates performed their parts is well known to the readers of poetry, who have never been able to diſtinguiſh their books from thoſe of Pope.

In

In 1723 was performed his tragedy of *Mariamne*; to which Southern, at whoſe houſe it was written, is ſaid to have contributed ſuch hints as his theatrical experience ſupplied. When it was ſhewn to Cibber it was rejected by him, with the additional inſolence of adviſing Fenton to engage himſelf in ſome employment of honeſt labour, by which he might obtain that ſupport which he could never hope from his poetry. The play was acted at the other theatre; and the brutal petulance of Cibber was confuted, though perhaps not ſhamed, by general applauſe. Fenton's profits are ſaid to have amounted to near a thouſand pounds, with which he diſcharged a debt contracted by his attendance at court.

Fenton ſeems to have had ſome peculiar ſyſtem of verſification. *Mariamne* is written in lines of ten ſyllables, with few of thoſe redundant terminations which the drama not only admits but requires, as more nearly approaching to real dialogue. The tenor of his verſe is ſo uniform that it cannot be thought caſual; and yet upon what principle he ſo conſtructed it, is difficult to diſcover.

The mention of his play brings to my mind a very trifling occurrence: Fenton was one day in the company of Broome his aſſociate, and Ford a clergyman, at that time too well known, whoſe abilities inſtead of furniſhing convivial merriment to the voluptuous and diſſolute, might have enabled him to excel among the virtuous and the wiſe. They determined all to ſee the *Merry Wives of Windſor*, which was acted that night; and Fenton, as a dramatick poet, took them to the ſtage-door; where the door-keeper enquiring who they were, was told that they were three very neceſſary men, Ford, Broome, and Fenton. The name in the play, which Pope reſtored to *Brook*, was then *Broome*.

It was perhaps after his play that he undertook to reviſe the punctuation of Milton's Poems, which, as the author neither wrote the original copy nor corrected the preſs, was ſuppoſed capable of amendment. To this edition he prefixed a ſhort and elegant account of Milton's life, written at once with tenderneſs and integrity.

He publiſhed likewiſe (1729) a very ſplendid edition of Waller, with notes often uſe-

ful, often entertaining, but too much extended by long quotations from Clarendon. Illuſtrations drawn from a book ſo eaſily conſulted, ſhould be made by reference rather than tranſcription.

The latter part of his life was calm and pleaſant. The relict of Sir William Trumbal invited him, by Pope's recommendation, to educate her ſon; whom he firſt inſtructed at home, and then attended to Cambridge. The lady afterwards detained him with her as the auditor of her accounts. He often wandered to London, and amuſed himſelf with the converſation of his friends.

He died in 1730, at Eaſthampſtead in Berkſhire, the ſeat of the lady Trumbal; and Pope, who had been always his friend, honoured him with an epitaph, of which he borrowed the two firſt lines from Craſhaw.

Fenton was tall and bulky, inclined to corpulence, which he did not leſſen by much exerciſe; for he was very ſluggiſh and ſedentary, roſe late, and when he had riſen, ſat down to his book or papers. A woman,

that once waited on him in a lodging, told him, as ſhe ſaid, that he would *lie a-bed, and be fed with a ſpoon.* This, however, was not the worſt that might have been prognoſticated; for Pope ſays, in his Letters, that *he died of indolence*; but his immediate diſtemper was the gout.

Of his morals and his converſation the account is uniform: he was never named but with praiſe and fondneſs, as a man in the higheſt degree amiable and excellent. Such was the character given him by the earl of Orrery, his pupil; ſuch is the teſtimony of Pope*, and ſuch were the ſuffrages of all who could boaſt of his acquaintance.

By a former writer of his Life a ſtory is told, which ought not to be forgotten. He uſed, in the latter part of his time, to pay his relations in the country an yearly viſit. At an entertainment made for the family by his elder brother, he obſerved that one of his ſiſters, who had married unfortunately, was abſent; and found, upon enquiry, that diſtreſs had made her thought unworthy of

* Spence.

invitation.

invitation. As ſhe was at no great diſtance, he refuſed to ſit at the table till ſhe was called, and, when ſhe had taken her place, was careful to ſhew her particular attention.

His collection of poems is now to be conſidered. The ode to the *Sun* is written upon a common plan, without uncommon ſentiments; but its greateſt fault is its length. No poem ſhould be long of which the purpoſe is only to ſtrike the fancy, without enlightening the underſtanding by precept, ratiocination, or narrative. A blaze firſt pleaſes, and then tires the ſight.

Of *Florelio* it is ſufficient to ſay that it is an occaſional paſtoral, which implies ſomething neither natural nor artificial, neither comick nor ſerious.

The next ode is irregular, and therefore defective. As the ſentiments are pious, they cannot eaſily be new; for what can be added to topicks on which ſucceſſive ages have been employed!

Of the *Paraphraſe on Iſaiah* nothing very favourable can be ſaid. Sublime and ſolemn

proſe gains little by a change to blank verſe; and the paraphraſt has deſerted his original, by admitting images not Aſiatick, at leaſt not Judaical:

—— Returning Peace,
Dove-eyed, and rob'd in white—

Of his petty poems ſome are very trifling, without any thing to be praiſed either in the thought or expreſſion. He is unlucky in his competitions; he tells the ſame idle tale with Congreve, and does not tell it ſo well. He tranſlates from Ovid the ſame epiſtle as Pope; but I am afraid not with equal happineſs.

To examine his performances one by one would be tedious. His tranſlation from Homer into blank verſe will find few readers while another can be had in rhyme. The piece addreſſed to Lambarde is no diſagreeable ſpecimen of epiſtolary poetry; and his ode to the lord Gower was pronounced by Pope the next ode in the Engliſh language to Dryden's Cecilia. Fenton may be juſtly ſtyled an excellent verſifyer and a good poet.

GAY.

# G A Y.

# GAY.

JOHN GAY, deſcended from an old family that had been long in poſſeſſion of the manour of * Goldworthy in Devonſhire, was born in 1688, at or near Barnſtaple, where he was educated by Mr. Luck, who taught the ſchool of that town with good reputation, and, a little before he retired from it, publiſhed a volume of Latin and Engliſh verſes. Under ſuch a maſter he was likely to form a taſte for poetry. Being born without proſpect of hereditary riches, he was ſent to London in his youth, and placed apprentice with a ſilk-mercer.

How long he continued behind the counter, or with what degree of ſoftneſs and dexterity he received and accommodated the ladies, as he probably took no delight in telling it, is

* *Goldworthy* does not appear in the *Villare*.

not known. The report is, that he was ſoon weary of either the reſtraint or ſervility of his occupation, and eaſily perſuaded his maſter to diſcharge him.

The dutcheſs of Monmouth, remarkable for inflexible perſeverance in her demand to be treated as a princeſs, in 1712 took Gay into her ſervice as ſecretary: by quitting a ſhop for ſuch ſervice, he might gain leiſure, but he certainly advanced little in the boaſt of independence. Of his leiſure he made ſo good uſe, that he publiſhed next year a poem on *Rural Sports*, and inſcribed it to Mr. Pope, who was then riſing faſt into reputation. Pope was pleaſed with the honour; and when he became acquainted with Gay, found ſuch attractions in his manners and converſation, that he ſeems to have received him into his inmoſt confidence; and a friendſhip was formed between them which laſted to their ſeparation by death, without any known abatement on either part. Gay was the general favourite of the whole aſſociation of wits; but they regarded him as a play-fellow rather than a partner; and treated him with more fondneſs than reſpect.

Next year he publiſhed *The Shepherd's Week*, ſix Engliſh Paſtorals, in which the images are drawn from real life, ſuch as it appears among the ruſticks in parts of England remote from London. Steele in ſome papers of the *Guardian* had praiſed Ambroſe Philips, as the Paſtoral writer that yielded only to Theocritus, Virgil, and Spenſer. Pope, who had alſo publiſhed Paſtorals, not pleaſed to be overlooked, drew up a compariſon of his own compoſitions with thoſe of Philips, in which he covertly gave himſelf the preference, while he ſeemed to diſown it. Not content with this, he is ſuppoſed to have incited Gay to write the *Shepherd's Week*, to ſhew, that if it be neceſſary to copy nature with minuteneſs, rural life muſt be exhibited ſuch as groſſneſs and ignorance have made it. So far the plan was reaſonable; but the Paſtorals are introduced by a *Proeme*, written with ſuch imitation as they could attain of obſolete language, and by conſequence in a ſtyle that was never ſpoken nor written in any age or in any place.

But the effect of reality and truth became conſpicuous, even when the intention was to ſhew them groveling and degraded. Theſe

Paſtorals became popular, and were read with delight as juſt repreſentations of rural manners and occupations by thoſe who had no intereſt in the rivalry of the poets, nor knowledge of the critical diſpute.

In 1713 he brought a comedy called *The Wife of Bath* upon the ſtage, but it received no applauſe; he printed it, however; and ſeventeen years after, having altered it, and, as he thought, adapted it more to the publick taſte, he offered it again to the town; but, though he was fluſhed with the ſucceſs of the *Beggar's Opera*, had the mortification to ſee it again rejected.

In the laſt year of queen Anne's life, Gay was made ſecretary to the earl of Clarendon, ambaſſador to the court of Hanover. This was a ſtation that naturally gave him hopes of kindneſs from every party; but the Queen's death put an end to her favours, and he had dedicated his *Shepherd's Week* to Bolingbroke, which Swift conſidered as the crime that obſtructed all kindneſs from the houſe of Hanover.

He

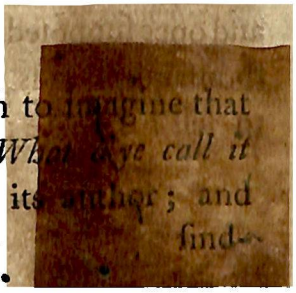
He did not, however, omit to improve the right which his office had given him to the notice of the royal family. On the arrival of the princeſs of Wales he wrote a poem, and obtained ſo much favour that both the Prince and Princeſs went to ſee his *What d'ye call it*, a kind of mock-tragedy, in which the images were comick, and the action grave; ſo that, as Pope relates, Mr. Cromwell, who could not hear what was ſaid, was at a loſs how to reconcile the laughter of the audience with the ſolemnity of the ſcene.

Of this performance the value certainly is but little; but it was one of the lucky trifles that give pleaſure by novelty, and was ſo much favoured by the audience that envy appeared againſt it in the form of criticiſm; and Griffin a player, in conjunction with Mr. Theobald, a man afterwards more remarkable, produced a pamphlet called the *Key to the What d'ye call it;* which, ſays Gay, *calls me a blockhead, and Mr. Pope a knave.*

But Fortune has always been inconſtant: Not long afterwards (1717) he endeavoured to entertain the town with *Three Hours after Mar-*

*Marriage*; a comedy written, as there is ſufficient reaſon for believing, by the joint aſſiſtance of Pope and Arbuthnot. O[redacted] poſe of it was to bring into contempt Dr. Woodward the Foſſiliſt, a man not really or juſtly contemptible. It had the fate which ſuch outrages deſerve: the ſcene in which Woodward was directly and apparently ridiculed, by the introduction of a mummy and a crocodile, diſguſted the audience, and the performance was driven off the ſtage with general condemnation.

Gay is repreſented as a man eaſily incited to hope, and deeply depreſſed when his hopes were diſappointed. This is not the character of a hero; but it may naturally ſupply ſomething more generally welcome, a ſoft and civil companion. Whoever is apt to hope good from others is diligent to pleaſe them; but he that believes his powers ſtrong enough to force their own way, commonly tries only to pleaſe himſelf.



He had been ſimple enough to imagine that thoſe who laughed at the *What d'ye call it* would raiſe the fortune of its author; and find-

finding nothing done, ſunk into dejection. His friends endeavoured to divert him. The earl of Burlington ſent him (1716) into Devonſhire; the year after, Mr. Pulteney took him to Aix; and in the following year lord Harcourt invited him to his ſeat, where, during his viſit, the two rural lovers were killed with lightning, as is particularly told in Pope's Letters.

Being now generally known, he publiſhed (1720) his Poems by ſubſcription with ſuch ſucceſs, that he raiſed a thouſand pounds; and called his friends to a conſultation, what uſe might be beſt made of it. Lewis, the ſteward of lord Oxford, adviſed him to intruſt it to the funds, and live upon the intereſt; Arbuthnot bad him intruſt it to Providence, and live upon the principal; Pope directed him, and was ſeconded by Swift, to purchaſe an annuity.

Gay in that diſaſtrous year * had a preſent from young Craggs of ſome South-ſea-ſtock, and once ſuppoſed himſelf to be maſter of twenty thouſand pounds. His friends perſuaded him to ſell his ſhare; but he dreamed of dignity

Spence.

and

and ſplendour, and could not bear to obſtruct his own fortune. He was then importuned to ſell as much as would purchaſe an hundred a year for life, *which*, ſays Fenton, *will make you ſure of a clean ſhirt and a ſhoulder of mutton every day.* This counſel was rejected; the profit and principal were loſt, and Gay ſunk under the calamity ſo low that his life became in danger.

By the care of his friends, among whom Pope appears to have ſhewn particular tenderneſs, his health was reſtored; and, returning to his ſtudies, he wrote a tragedy called *The Captives*, which he was invited to read before the princeſs of Wales. When the hour came, he ſaw the princeſs and her ladies all in expectation, and advancing with reverence, too great for any other attention, ſtumbled at a ſtool, and falling forwards, threw down a weighty Japan ſcreen. The princeſs ſtarted, the ladies ſcreamed, and poor Gay after all the diſturbance was ſtill to read his play.

The fate of *The Captives* * I know not; but he now thought himſelf in favour, and

* It was acted at Drury-Lane in 1724.

under-

undertook (1726) to write a volume of Fables for the improvement of the young duke of Cumberland. For this he is ſaid to have been promiſed a reward, which he had doubtleſs magnified with all the wild expectations of indigence and vanity.

Next year the Prince and Princeſs became King and Queen, and Gay was to be great and happy; but upon the ſettlement of the houſehold he found himſelf appointed gentleman uſher to the princeſs Louiſa. By this offer he thought himſelf inſulted, and ſent a meſſage to the Queen, that he was too old for the place. There ſeem to have been many machinations employed afterwards in his favour; and diligent court was paid to Mrs. Howard, afterwards counteſs of Suffolk, who was much beloved by the King and Queen, to engage her intereſt for his promotion; but ſolicitations, verſes, and flatteries were thrown away; the lady heard them, and did nothing.

All the pain which he ſuffered from the neglect, or, as he perhaps termed it, the ingratitude of the court, may be ſuppoſed to

have been driven away by the unexampled ſucceſs of the *Beggar's Opera*. This play, written in ridicule of the muſical Italian Drama, was firſt offered to Cibber and his brethren at Drury-Lane, and rejected; it being then carried to Rich, had the effect, as was ludicrouſly ſaid, of *making* Gay *rich*, and Rich *gay*.

Of this lucky piece, as the reader cannot but wiſh to know the original and progreſs, I have inſerted the relation which Spence has given in Pope's words.

" Dr. Swift had been obſerving once to " Mr. Gay, what an odd pretty ſort of a " thing a Newgate Paſtoral might make. " Gay was inclined to try at ſuch a thing " for ſome time; but afterwards thought it " would be better to write a comedy on the " ſame plan. This was what gave riſe to " the *Beggar's Opera*. He began on it; " and when firſt he mentioned it to Swift, " the Doctor did not much like the project. " As he carried it on, he ſhewed what he " wrote to both of us, and we now and " then gave a correction, or a word or two

of

" of advice; but it was wholly of his own " writing.—When it was done, neither of " us thought it would ſucceed.—We ſhewed " it to Congreve; who, after reading it over, " ſaid, It would either take greatly, or be " damned confoundedly.—We were all, at " the firſt night of it, in great uncertainty " of the event; till we were very much en- " couraged by overhearing the duke of Ar- " gyle, who ſat in the next box to us, ſay, " 'It will do—it muſt do! I ſee it in the eyes " of them.' This was a good while before " the firſt Act was over, and ſo gave us eaſe " ſoon; for that duke (beſides his own good " taſte) has a particular knack, as any one " now living, in diſcovering the taſte of the " publick. He was quite right in this, " as uſual; the good nature of the audience " appeared ſtronger and ſtronger every act, " and ended in a clamour of applauſe."

Its reception is thus recorded in the notes to the *Dunciad:*

" This piece was received with greater ap- " plauſe than was ever known. Beſides be- " ing acted in London ſixty-three days

" without interruption, and renewed the " next ſeaſon with equal applauſe, it ſpread " into all the great towns of England, was " played in many places to the thirtieth and " fortieth time; at Bath and Briſtol fifty, &c. " It made its progreſs into Wales, Scotland, " and Ireland, where it was performed twen- " ty-four days ſucceſſively. The ladies car- " ried about with them the favourite ſongs " of it in fans, and houſes were furniſhed " with it in ſcreens. The fame of it was " not confined to the author only. The " perſon who acted Polly, till then obſcure, " became all at once the favourite of the " town; her pictures were engraved, and " ſold in great numbers; her Life written, " books of letters and verſes to her pub- " liſhed, and pamphlets made even of her " ſayings and jeſts. Furthermore, it drove " out of England (for that ſeaſon) the Italian " Opera, which had carried all before it for " ten years."

Of this performance, when it was printed, the reception was different, according to the different opinion of its readers. Swift commended it for the excellence of its morality, as

as a piece that *placed all kinds of vice in the ſtrongeſt and moſt odious light*; but others, and among them Dr. Herring, afterwards archbiſhop of Canterbury, cenſured it as giving encouragement not only to vice but to crimes, by making a highwayman the hero, and diſmiſſing him at laſt unpuniſhed. It has been even ſaid, that after the exhibition of the *Beggar's Opera* the gangs of robbers were evidently multiplied.

Both theſe deciſions are ſurely exaggerated. The play, like many others, was plainly written only to divert, without any moral purpoſe, and is therefore not likely to do good; nor can it be conceived, without more ſpeculation than life requires or admits, to be productive of much evil. Highwaymen and houſe-breakers ſeldom frequent the play-houſe, or mingle in any elegant diverſion; nor is it poſſible for any one to imagine that he may rob with ſafety, becauſe he ſees Macheath reprieved upon the ſtage.

This objection however, or ſome other rather political than moral, obtained ſuch prevalence, that when Gay produced a ſe-

cond part under the name of *Polly*, it was prohibited by the Lord Chamberlain; and he was forced to recompenſe his repulſe by a ſubſcription, which is ſaid to have been ſo liberally beſtowed, that what he called a preſſion ended in profit. The* publication was ſo much favoured, that though the firſt part gained him four hundred pounds, near thrice as much was the profit of the ſecond.

He received yet another recompenſe for this ſuppoſed hardſhip, in the affectionate attention of the duke and dutcheſs of Queenſberry, into whoſe houſe he was taken, and with whom he paſſed the remaining part of his life. The* duke, conſidering his want of œconomy, undertook the management of his money, and gave it to him as he wanted it. But it is ſuppoſed that the diſcountenance of the Court ſunk deep into his heart, and gave him more diſcontent than the applauſes or tenderneſs of his friends could overpower. He ſoon fell into his old diſtemper, an habitual colick, and languiſhed, though with many intervals of eaſe and cheerfulneſs, till a violent fit at laſt ſeized him, and hurried

* Spence.

him

him to the grave, as Arbuthnot reported, with more precipitance than he had ever known. He died on the fourth of December 1732, and was buried in Weſtminſter Abbey. The letter which brought an account of his death to Swift was laid by for ſome days unopened, becauſe when he received it he was impreſt with the preconception of ſome misfortune.

After his death was publiſhed a ſecond volume of Fables more political than the former. His opera of *Achilles* was acted, and the profits were given to two widow ſiſters, who inherited what he left, as his lawful heirs; for he died without a will, though he had gathered* three thouſand pounds. There have appeared likewiſe under his name a comedy called the *Diſtreſt Wife*, and the *Rehearſal at Gotham*, a piece of humour.

The character given him by Pope* is this, that *he was a natural man, without deſign, who ſpoke what he thought, and juſt as he thought it*; and that *he was of a timid temper,*

* Spence.

*and fearful of giving offence to the great*; which caution however, ſays Pope, was of no avail.

As a poet, he cannot be rated very high. He was, as I once heard a female critick remark, *of a lower order*. He had not in any great degree the *mens divinior*, the dignity of genius. Much however muſt be allowed to the author of a new ſpecies of compoſition, though it be not of the higheſt kind. We owe to Gay the Ballad Opera; a mode of comedy which at firſt was ſuppoſed to delight only by its novelty, but has now by the experience of half a century been found ſo well accommodated to the diſpoſition of a popular audience, that it is likely to keep long poſſeſſion of the ſtage. Whether this new drama was the product of judgement or of luck, the praiſe of it muſt be given to the inventor; and there are many writers read with more reverence, to whom ſuch merit of originality cannot be attributed.

His firſt performance, the *Rural Sports*, is ſuch as was eaſily planned and executed; it is never contemptible, nor ever excellent.

The

The *Fan* is one of thoſe mythological fictions which antiquity delivers ready to the hand; but which, like other things that lie open to ev[illegible]one's uſe, are of little value. The attention naturally retires from a new tale of Venus, Diana, and Minerva.

His Fables ſeem to have been a favourite work; for, having publiſhed one volume, he left another behind him. Of this kind of Fables, the authors do not appear to have formed any diſtinct or ſettled notion. Phædrus evidently confounds them with *Tales*, and Gay both with *Tales* and *Allegories*. A *Fable* or *Apologue*, ſuch as is now under conſideration, ſeems to be, in its genuine ſtate, a narrative in which beings irrational, and ſometimes inanimate, *arbores loquuntur, non tantum feræ*, are, for the purpoſe of moral inſtruction, feigned to act and ſpeak with human intereſts and paſſions. To this deſcription the compoſitions of Gay do not always conform. For a Fable he gives now and then a Tale or an Allegory; and from ſome, by whatever name they may be called, it will be difficult to extract any moral principle. They are, however, told with live-

lineſs;

lineſs; the verſification is ſmooth, and the diction, though now-and-then a little conſtrained by the meaſure or the rhyme, is generally happy.

To *Trivia* may be allowed all that it claims; it is ſpritely, various, and pleaſant. The ſubject is of that kind which Gay was by nature qualified to adorn; yet ſome of his decorations may be juſtly wiſhed away. An honeſt blackſmith might have done for Patty what is performed by Vulcan. The appearance of Cloacina is nauſeous and ſuperfluous; a ſhoeboy could have been produced by the caſual cohabitation of mere mortals. Horace's rule is broken in both caſes; there is no *dignus vindice nodus*, no difficulty that required any ſupernatural interpoſition. A patten may be made by the hammer of a mortal, and a baſtard may be dropped by a human ſtrumpet. On great occaſions, and on ſmall, the mind is repelled by uſeleſs and apparent falſehood.

Of his little Poems the publick judgement ſeems to be right; they are neither much eſteemed, nor totally deſpiſed. Thoſe that

pleaſe leaſt are the pieces to which *Gulliver* gave occaſion; for who can much delight in the echo of an unnatural fiction?

*Dione* is a counterpart to *Amynta*, and *Paſtor Fido*, and other trifles of the ſame kind, eaſily imitated, and unworthy of imitation. What the Italians call comedies from a happy concluſion, Gay calls a tragedy from a mournful event, but the ſtyle of the Italians and of Gay is equally tragical. There is ſomething in the poetical *Arcadia* ſo remote from known reality and ſpeculative poſſibility, that we can never ſupport its repreſentation through a long work. A Paſtoral of an hundred lines may be endured; but who will hear of ſheep and goats, and myrtle bowers and purling rivulets, through five acts? Such ſcenes pleaſe Barbarians in the dawn of literature, and children in the dawn of life; but will be for the moſt part thrown away, as men grow wiſe, and nations grow learned.

GRAN-

# GRANVILLE.

# GRANVILLE.

OF GEORGE GRANVILLE, or as others write *Greenville*, or *Grenville*, afterwards lord Landſdown of Biddeford in the county of Devon, leſs is known than his name and rank might give reaſon to expect. He was born about 1667, the ſon of Bernard Greenville, who was entruſted by Monk with the moſt private tranſactions of the Reſtoration, and the grandſon of Sir Bevil Greenville, who died in the King's cauſe, at the battle of Landſdowne.

His early education was ſuperintended by Sir William Ellis; and his progreſs was ſuch, that before the age of twelve he was ſent to Cambridge, where he pronounced a copy of his own verſes to the princeſs Mary d'Eſté of Modena, then dutcheſs of York, when ſhe viſited the univerſity.

At

At thea cceſſion of king James, being now at eighteen, he again exerted his poetical powers, and addreſſed the new monarch in three ſhort pieces, of which the firſt is profane, and the two others ſuch as a boy might be expected to produce; but he was commended by old Waller, who perhaps was pleaſed to find himſelf imitated, in ſix lines, which, though they begin with nonſenſe and end with dulneſs, excited in the young author a rapture of acknowledgement, *in numbers ſuch as* Waller's *ſelf might uſe.*

It was probably about this time that he wrote the poem to the earl of Peterborough, upon his *accompliſhment* of the duke of York's marriage with the princeſs of Modena, whoſe charms appear to have gained a ſtrong prevalence over his imagination, and upon whom nothing ever has been charged but imprudent piety, an intemperate and miſguided zeal for the propagation of popery.

However faithful Granville might have been to the King, or however enamoured of the Queen, he has left no reaſon for ſuppoſing that he approved either the artifices or the

the violence with which the King's religion was inſinuated or obtruded. He endeavoured to be true at once to the King and to the Church.

Of this regulated loyalty he has tranſmitted to poſterity a ſufficient proof, in the letter which he wrote to his father about a month before the prince of Orange landed.

" Mar, near Doncaſter, Oct. 6, 1688.

" To the honourable Mr. Barnard Granville,
" at the earl of Bathe's, St. James's.

" SIR,

" Your having no proſpect of obtaining a " commiſſion for me, can no way alter or " cool my deſire at this important juncture " to venture my life, in ſome manner or " other, for my King and my Country.

" I cannot bear living under the reproach " of lying obſcure and idle in a country re- " tirement, when every man who has the " leaſt ſenſe of honour ſhould be preparing " for the field.

"You may remember, Sir, with what re-
"luctance I ſubmitted to your commands
"upon Monmouth's rebellion, when no im-
"portunity could prevail with you to permit
"me to leave the Academy: I was too young
"to be hazarded; but, give me leave to
"ſay, it is glorious at any age to die for
"one's country, and the ſooner the nobler
"the ſacrifice.

"I am now older by three years. My
"uncle Bathe was not ſo old when he was
"left among the ſlain at the battle of New-
"bury; nor you yourſelf, Sir, when you
"made your eſcape from your tutor's, to
"join your brother at the defence of Scilly.

"The ſame cauſe is now come round about
"again. The King has been miſled; let
"thoſe who have miſled him be anſwerable
"for it. Nobody can deny but he is ſacred
"in his own perſon, and it is every honeſt
"man's duty to defend it.

"You are pleaſed to ſay, it is yet doubt-
"ful if the Hollanders are raſh enough to
"make ſuch an attempt; but, be that as it
"will,

"will, I beg leave to inſiſt upon it, that I may "be preſented to his majeſty, as one whoſe "utmoſt ambition it is to devote his life to his "ſervice, and my country's, after the example "of all my anceſtors.

"The gentry aſſembled at York, to agree "upon the choice of repreſentatives for the "country, have prepared an addreſs, to aſſure "his majeſty they are ready to ſacrifice their "lives and fortunes for him upon this and all "other occaſions; but at the ſame time they "humbly beſeech him to give them ſuch ma-"giſtrates as may be agreeable to the laws "of the land; for, at preſent, there is no au-"thority to which they can legally ſubmit.

"They have been beating up for volun-"teers at York, and the towns adjacent, to "ſupply the regiments at Hull; but nobody "will liſt.

"By what I can hear, every body wiſhes "well to the King; but they would be glad "his miniſters were hanged.

"The winds continue ſo contrary, that no "landing can be ſo ſoon as was apprehended;

" therefore I may hope, with your leave and " aſſiſtance, to be in readineſs before any action " can begin. I beſeech you, Sir, moſt humbly " and moſt earneſtly, to add this one act of " indulgence more to ſo many other teſti- " monies which I have conſtantly received of " your goodneſs; and be pleaſed to believe " me always, with the utmoſt duty and ſub- " miſſion, Sir,

" Your moſt dutiful ſon,

" and moſt obedient ſervant,

" GEO. GRANVILLE."

Through the whole reign of king William he is ſuppoſed to have lived in literary retirement, and indeed had for ſome time few other pleaſures but thoſe of ſtudy in his power. He was, as the biographers obſerve, the younger ſon of a younger brother; a denomination by which our anceſtors proverbially expreſſed the loweſt ſtate of penury and dependance. He is ſaid, however, to have preſerved himſelf at this time from diſgrace and difficulties by œconomy, which he forgot or neglected in life more advanced, and in better fortune.

Abſal

About this time he became enamoured of the counteſs of Newburgh, whom he has celebrated with ſo much ardour by the name of Mira. He wrote verſes to her before he was three and twenty, and may be forgiven if he regarded the face more than the mind. Poets are ſometimes in too much haſte to praiſe.

In the time of his retirement it is probable that he compoſed his dramatick pieces, the *She-Gallants* (acted 1696), which he reviſed, and called *Once a Lover and always a Lover*; *The Jew of Venice*, altered from Shakſpeare's *Merchant of Venice* (1701); *Heroick Love*, a tragedy (1698); *The Britiſh Enchanters* (1706), a dramatick poem; and *Peleus and Thetis*, a maſque, written to accompany *The Jew of Venice*.

The comedies, which he has not printed in his own edition of his works, I never ſaw; *Once a Lover and always a Lover*, is ſaid to be in a great degree indecent and groſs. Granville could not admire without bigotry; he copied the wrong as well as the right from his maſters, and may be ſuppoſed to have learned obſcenity from Wycherley as he learned mythology from Waller.

In his *Jew of Venice*, as Rowe remarks, the character of *Shilock* is made comick, and we are prompted to laughter inſtead of deteſtation.

It is evident that *Heroick Love* was written, and preſented on the ſtage, before the death of Dryden. It is a mythological tragedy, upon the love of Agamemnon and Chryſeis, and therefore eaſily ſunk into neglect, though praiſed in verſe by Dryden, and in proſe by Pope.

It is concluded by the wiſe Ulyſſes with this ſpeech:

Fate holds the ſtrings, and men like children move
But as they're led; ſucceſs is from above.

At the acceſſion of queen Anne, having his fortune improved by bequeſts from his father, and his uncle the earl of Bathe, he was choſen into parliament for Fowey. He ſoon after engaged in a joint tranſlation of the *Invectives againſt Philip*, with a deſign, ſurely weak and puerile, of turning the thunder of Demoſthenes upon the head of Lewis.

He

He afterwards (in 1706) had his eſtate again augmented by an inheritance from his elder brother, Sir Bevil Granville, who, as he returned from the government of Barbadoes, died at ſea. He continued to ſerve in parliament; and in the ninth year of queen Anne was choſen knight of the ſhire for Cornwall.

At the memorable change of the miniſtry (1710), he was made ſecretary at war, in the place of Mr. Robert Walpole.

Next year, when the violence of party made twelve peers in a day, Mr. Granville became *Lord Lanſdown Baron Biddeford*, by a promotion juſtly remarked to be not invidious, becauſe he was the heir of a family in which two peerages, that of the earl of Bathe and lord Granville of Potheridge, had lately become extinct. Being now high in the Queen's favour, he (1712) was appointed comptroller of the houſehold, and a privy counſellor; and to his other honours was added the dedication of Pope's *Windſor Foreſt*. He was advanced next year to be treaſurer of the houſehold.

Of theſe favours he ſoon loſt all but his title; for at the acceſſion of king George his place was given to the earl Cholmondeley, and he was perſecuted with the reſt of his party. Having proteſted againſt the bill for attainting Ormond and Bolingbroke, he was, after the inſurrection in Scotland, ſeized Sept. 26, 1715, as a ſuſpected man, and confined in the Tower till Feb. 8, 1717, when he was at laſt releaſed, and reſtored to his ſeat in parliament; where (1719) he made a very ardent and animated ſpeech againſt the repeal of the bill to prevent Occaſional Conformity, which however, though it was then printed, he has not inſerted into his works.

Some time afterwards (about 1722), being perhaps embarraſſed by his profuſion, he went into foreign countries, with the uſual pretence of recovering his health. In this ſtate of leiſure and retirement, he received the firſt volume of Burnet's Hiſtory, of which he cannot be ſuppoſed to have approved the general tendency, and where he thought himſelf able to detect ſome particular falſehoods. He therefore undertook the vindication of general Monk from ſome calumnies of Dr. Burnet,

net; and ſome miſrepreſentations of Mr. Echard. This was anſwered civilly by Mr. Thomas Burnet and Oldmixon, and more roughly by Dr. Colbatch.

His other hiſtorical performance is a defence of his relation Sir Richard Greenville, whom lord Clarendon has ſhewn in a form very unamiable. So much is urged in this apology, to juſtify many actions that have been repreſented as culpable, and to palliate the reſt, that the reader is reconciled for the greater part; and it is made very probable that Clarendon was by perſonal enmity diſpoſed to think the worſt of Greenville, as Greenville was alſo very willing to think the worſt of Clarendon. Theſe pieces were publiſhed at his return to England.

Being now deſirous to conclude his labours, and enjoy his reputation, he publiſhed (1732) a very beautiful and ſplendid edition of his works, in which he omitted what he diſapproved, and enlarged what ſeemed deficient.

He now went to Court, and was kindly received by queen Caroline; to whom and

to

to the princeſs Anne he preſented his works, with verſes on the blank leaves, with which he concluded his poetical labours.

He died in Hanover-ſquare, Jan. 30, 1735, having a few days before buried his wife, the lady Anne Villiers, widow to Mr. Thynne, by whom he had four daughters, but no ſon.

Writers commonly derive their reputation from their works; but there are works which owe their reputation to the character of the writer. The publick ſometimes has its favourites, whom it rewards for one ſpecies of excellence with the honours due to another. From him whom we reverence for his beneficence we do not willingly withhold the praiſe of genius; a man of exalted merit becomes at once an accompliſhed writer, as a beauty finds no great difficulty in paſſing for a wit.

Granville was a man illuſtrious by his birth, and therefore attracted notice: ſince he is by Pope ſtyled *the polite*, he muſt be ſuppoſed elegant in his manners, and generally loved: he

he was in times of conteſt and turbulence ſteady to his party, and obtained that eſteem which is always conferred upon firmneſs and conſiſtency. With thoſe advantages, having learned the art of verſifying, he declared himſelf a poet; and his claim to the laurel was allowed.

But by a critick of a later generation who takes up his book without any favourable prejudices, the praiſe already received will be thought ſufficient; for his works do not ſhew him to have had much comprehenſion from nature, or illumination from learning. He ſeems to have had no ambition above the imitation of Waller, of whom he has copied the faults, and very little more. He is for ever amuſing himſelf with the puerilities of mythology; his King is Jupiter, who, if the Queen brings no children, has a barren Juno. The Queen is compounded of Juno, Venus, and Minerva. His poem on the dutcheſs of Grafton's law-ſuit, after having rattled awhile with Juno and Pallas, Mars and Alcides, Caſſiope, Niobe, and the Propetides, Hercules, Minos, and Rhadamanthus, at laſt concludes its folly with profaneneſs.

His

His verſes to Mira, which are moſt frequently mentioned, have little in them of either art or nature, of the ſentiments of a lover, or the language of a poet: there may be found, now-and-then, a happier effort; but they are commonly feeble and unaffecting, or forced and extravagant.

His little pieces are ſeldom either ſpritely or elegant, either keen or weighty. They are triſles written by idleneſs, and publiſhed by vanity. But his Prologues and Epilogues have a juſt claim to praiſe.

The *Progreſs of Beauty* ſeems one of his moſt elaborate pieces, and is not deficient in ſplendor and gaiety; but the merit of original thought is wanting. Its higheſt praiſe is the ſpirit with which he celebrates king James's conſort, when ſhe was a queen no longer.

The *Eſſay on unnatural Flights in Poetry* is not inelegant nor injudicious, and has ſomething of vigour beyond moſt of his other performances: his precepts are juſt, and his cautions proper; they are indeed not new,

but

but in a didactick poem novelty is to be expected only in the ornaments and illuſtrations. His poetical precepts are accompanied with agreeable and inſtructive notes.

The Maſque of *Peleus and Thetis* has here and there a pretty line; but it is not always melodious, and the concluſion is wretched.

In his *Britiſh Enchanters* he has bidden defiance to all chronology, by confounding the inconſiſtent manners of different ages; but the dialogue has often the air of Dryden's rhyming plays; and the ſongs are lively, though not very correct. This is, I think, far the beſt of his works; for, if it has many faults, it has likewiſe paſſages which are at leaſt pretty, though they do not riſe to any high degree of excellence.

# YALDEN

# YALDEN.

THOMAS YALDEN, the ſixth ſon of Mr. John Yalden of Suſſex, was born in the city of Exeter in 1671. Having been educated in the grammar-ſchool belonging to Magdalen College in Oxford, he was in 1690, at the age of nineteen, admitted commoner of Magdalen Hall, under the tuition of *Joſiah Pullen*, a man whoſe name is ſtill remembered in the univerſity. He became next year one of the ſcholars of Magdalen College, where he was diſtinguiſhed by a lucky accident.

It was his turn, one day, to pronounce a declamation; and Dr. Hough, the preſident, happening to attend, thought the compoſition too good to be the ſpeaker's. Some time after, the doctor, finding him a little irregularly buſy in the library, ſet him an exerciſe

for puniſhment; and, that he might not be deceived by any artifice, locked the door. Yalden, as it happened, had been lately reading on the ſubject given, and produced with little difficulty a compoſition which ſo pleaſed the preſident, that he told him his former ſuſpicions, and promiſed to favour him.

Among his contemporaries in the college were Addiſon and Sacheverell, men who were in thoſe times friends, and who both adopted Yalden to their intimacy. Yalden continued, throughout his life, to think as probably he thought at firſt, yet did not loſe the friendſhip of Addiſon.

When Namur was taken by king William, Yalden made an ode. There was never any reign more celebrated by the poets than that of William, who had very little regard for ſong himſelf, but happened to employ miniſters who pleaſed themſelves with the praiſe of patronage.

Of this ode mention is made in an humorous poem of that time, called *The Oxford Laureat*; in which, after many claims had been

been made and rejected, Yalden is repreſented as demanding the laurel, and as being called to his trial, inſtead of receiving a reward.

His crime was for being a felon in verſe,
And preſenting his theft to the king;
The firſt was a trick not uncommon or ſcarce,
But the laſt was an impudent thing:
Yet what he had ſtol'n was ſo little worth ſtealing,
They forgave him the damage and coſt;
Had he ta'en the whole ode, as he took it piece-mealing,
They had fin'd him but ten pence at moſt.

The poet whom he was charged with robbing was Congreve.

He wrote another poem on the death of the duke of Glouceſter.

In 1710 he became fellow of the college; and next year, entering into orders, was preſented by the ſociety with a living in Warwickſhire, conſiſtent with his fellowſhip, and choſen lecturer of moral philoſophy, a very honourable office.

On the acceſſion of queen Anne he wrote another poem; and is ſaid, by the author of the *Biographia*, to have declared himſelf of the party who had the honourable diſtinction of High-churchmen.

In 1706 he was received into the family of the duke of Beaufort. Next year he became doctor in divinity, and ſoon after reſigned his fellowſhip and lecture; and, as a token of his gratitude, gave the college a picture of their founder.

He was made rector of *Chalton* and *Cleanville*, two adjoining towns and benefices in Hertfordſhire; and had the prebends, or ſinecures, of *Deans*, *Hains*, and *Pendles* in Devonſhire. He had before been choſen, in 1698, preacher of Bridewell Hoſpital, upon the reſignation of Dr. Atterbury.

From this time he ſeems to have led a quiet and inoffenſive life, till the clamour was raiſed about Atterbury's plot. Every loyal eye was on the watch for abettors or partakers of the horrid conſpiracy; and Dr. Yalden, having ſome acquaintance with the biſhop,

biſhop, and being familiarly converſant with Kelly his ſecretary, fell under ſuſpicion, and was taken into cuſtody.

Upon his examination he was charged with a dangerous correſpondence with Kelly. The correſpondence he acknowledged; but maintained, that it had no treaſonable tendency. His papers were ſeized; but nothing was found that could fix a crime upon him, except two words in his pocket-book, *thorough-paced doctrine*. This expreſſion the imagination of his examiners had impregnated with treaſon, and the doctor was enjoined to explain them. Thus preſſed, he told them that the words had lain unheeded in his pocket-book from the time of queen Anne, and that he was aſhamed to give an account of them; but the truth was, that he had gratified his curioſity one day, by hearing *Daniel Burgeſs* in the pulpit, and thoſe words was a memorial hint of a remarkable ſentence by which he warned his congregation to *beware of* thorough-paced doctrine, *that doctrine, which, coming in at one ear, paces through the head, and goes out at the other.*

Nothing worſe than this appearing in his papers, and no evidence ariſing againſt him, he was ſet at liberty.

It will not be ſuppoſed that a man of this character attained high dignities in the church; but he ſtill retained the friendſhip, and frequented the converſation, of a very numerous and ſplendid body of acquaintance. He died July 16, 1736, in the 66th year of his age.

Of his poems, many are of that irregular kind, which, when he formed his poetical character, was ſuppoſed to be Pindarick. Having fixed his attention on Cowley as a model, he has attempted in ſome ſort to rival him, and has written a *Hymn* to *Darkneſs*, evidently as a counter-part to Cowley's *Hymn* to *Light*.

This hymn ſeems to be his beſt performance, and is, for the moſt part, imagined with great vigour, and expreſſed with great propriety. I will not tranſcribe it. The ſeven firſt ſtanzas are good; but the third, fourth, and ſeventh are the beſt: the eighth

ſeems to involve a contradiction; the tenth is exquiſitely beautiful; the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth, are partly mythological, and partly religious, and therefore not ſuitable to each other: he might better have made the whole merely philoſophical.

There are two ſtanzas in this poem where Yalden may be ſuſpected, though hardly convicted, of having conſulted the *Hymnus ad Umbram* of *Wowerus*, in the ſixth ſtanza, which anſwers in ſome ſort to theſe lines:

Illa ſuo præeſt nocturnis numine ſacris—
Perque vias errare novis dat ſpectra figuris,
Maneſque excitos medios ululare per agros
Sub noctem, et queſtu notos complere penates.

And again, at the concluſion:

Illa ſuo ſenium ſecludit corpore toto
Haud numeranda jugi fugientia ſecula lapſu,
Ergo ubi poſtremum mundi compage ſolutâ
Hanc rerum molem ſuprema abſumpſerit hora
Ipſa leves cineres nube amplectetur opacâ,
Et priſco imperio rurſus dominabitur UMBRA.

His *Hymn* to *Light* is not equal to the other. He ſeems to think that there is an Eaſt abſolute and poſitive where the Morning riſes.

In the laſt ſtanza, having mentioned the ſudden eruption of new created Light, he ſays,

Awhile th'Almighty wondering ſtood.

He ought to have remembered that Infinite Knowledge can never wonder. All wonder is the effect of novelty upon ignorance.

Of his other poems it is ſufficient to ſay that they deſerve peruſal, though they are not always exactly poliſhed, and the rhymes are ſometimes very ill ſorted, and though his faults ſeem rather the omiſſions of idleneſs than the negligences of enthuſiaſm.

TICKELL.

# TICKELL.

THOMAS TICKELL, the ſon of the reverend Richard Tickell, was born in 1686 at Bridekirk in Cumberland; and in April 1701 became a member of Queen's College in Oxford; in 1708 he was made Maſter of Arts, and two years afterwards was choſen Fellow; for which, as he did not comply with the ſtatutes by taking orders, he obtained a diſpenſation from the Crown. He held his Fellowſhip till 1726, and then vacated it, by marrying, in that year, at Dublin.

Tickell was not one of thoſe ſcholars who wear away their lives in cloſets; he entered early into the world, and was long buſy in publick affairs; in which he was initiated under the patronage of Addiſon, whoſe notice he is ſaid to have gained by his verſes in praiſe of *Roſamond*.

To

To thoſe verſes it would not have been juſt to deny regard; for they contain ſome of the moſt elegant encomiaſtick ſtrains; and, among the innumerable poems of the ſame kind, it will be hard to find one with which they need to fear a compariſon. It may deſerve obſervation, that when Pope wrote long afterwards in praiſe of Addiſon, he has copied, at leaſt has reſembled, Tickell.

Let joy ſalute fair Roſamonda's ſhade,
And wreaths of myrtle crown the lovely maid,
While now perhaps with Dido's ghoſt ſhe roves,
And hears and tells the ſtory of their loves,
Alike they mourn, alike they bleſs their fate,
Since Love, which made them wretched, made
them great;
Nor longer that relentleſs doom bemoan,
Which gain'd a Virgil and an Addiſon.

TICKELL.

Then future ages with delight ſhall ſee
How Plato's, Bacon's, Newton's, looks agree;
Or in fair ſeries laurel'd bards be ſhown,
A Virgil there, and here an Addiſon. POPE.

He produced another piece of the ſame kind at the appearance of *Cato*, with equal ſkill, but not equal happineſs.

When

When the miniſters of queen Anne were negotiating with France, Tickell publiſhed *The Proſpect of Peace*, a poem, of which the tendency was to reclaim the nation from the pride of conqueſt to the pleaſures of tranquillity. How far Tickell, whom Swift afterwards mentioned as *Whiggiſſimus*, had then connected himſelf with any party, I know not; this poem certainly did not flatter the practices, or promote the opinions, of the men by whom he was afterwards befriended.

Mr. Addiſon, however he hated the men then in power, ſuffered his friendſhip to prevail over his publick ſpirit, and gave in the *Spectator* ſuch praiſes of Tickell's poem, that when, after having long wiſhed to peruſe it, I laid hold on it at laſt, I thought it unequal to the honours which it had received, and found it a piece to be approved rather than admired. But the hope excited by a work of genius, being general and indefinite, is rarely gratified. It was read at that time with ſo much favour, that ſix editions were ſold.

At

At the arrival of king George he ſung *The Royal Progreſs*; which being inſerted in the *Spectator* is well known, and of which it is juſt to ſay that it is neither high nor low.

The poetical incident of moſt importance in Tickell's life was his publication of the firſt book of the *Iliad*, as tranſlated by himſelf, an apparent oppoſition to Pope's *Homer*, of which the firſt part made its entrance into the world at the ſame time.

Addiſon declared that the rival verſions were both good; but that Tickell's was the beſt that ever was made; and with Addiſon the wits, his adherents and followers, were certain to concur. Pope does not appear to have been much diſmayed; *for*, ſays he, *I have the town, that is, the mob, on my ſide.* But he remarks, that *it is common for the ſmaller party to make up in diligence what they want in numbers*; he *appeals to the people as his proper judges*; *and if they are not inclined to condemn him, he is in little care about the high-flyers at Button's.*

Pope

Pope did not long think Addiſon an impartial judge; for he conſidered him as the writer of Tickell's verſion. The reaſons for his ſuſpicion I will literally tranſcribe from Mr. Spence's Collection.

" There had been a coldneſs between Mr. " Addiſon and me for ſome time; and we " had not been in company together, for a " good while, any where but at Button's " coffee-houſe, where I uſed to ſee him al- " moſt every day.—On his meeting me there, " one day in particular, he took me aſide, " and ſaid he ſhould be glad to dine with " me, at ſuch a tavern, if I ſtaid till thoſe " people were gone (Budgel and Philips). " We went accordingly; and after dinner " Mr. Addiſon ſaid, 'That he had wanted " for ſome time to talk with me; that his " friend Tickell had formerly, whilſt at Ox- " ford, tranſlated the firſt book of the *Iliad*; " that he deſigned to print it, and had de- " ſired him to look it over; that he muſt " therefore beg that I would not deſire him " to look over my firſt book, becauſe, if " he did, it would have the air of double- " dealing.' I aſſured him that I did not

" at

" at all take it ill of Mr. Tickell that he was
" going to publiſh his tranſlation; that he
" certainly had as much right to tranſlate
" any author as myſelf; and that publiſhing
" both was entering on a fair ſtage. I then
" added, that I would not deſire him to look
" over my firſt book of the *Iliad*, becauſe
" he had looked over Mr. Tickell's; but
" could wiſh to have the benefit of his ob-
" ſervations on my ſecond, which I had
" then finiſhed, and which Mr. Tickell had
" not touched upon. Accordingly I ſent
" him the ſecond book the next morning;
" and Mr. Addiſon a few days after returned
" it, with very high commendations.—Soon
" after it was generally known that Mr.
" Tickell was publiſhing the firſt book of the
" *Iliad*, I met Dr. Young in the ſtreet; and,
" upon our falling into that ſubject, the
" Doctor expreſſed a great deal of ſurprize
" at Tickell's having had ſuch a tranſlation
" ſo long by him. He ſaid, that it was in-
" conceivable to him, and that there muſt
" be ſome miſtake in the matter; that each
" uſed to communicate to the other what-
" ever verſes they wrote, even to the leaſt
" things; that Tickell could not have been

" buſied in ſo long a work there without his " knowing ſomething of the matter; and " that he had never heard a ſingle word of " it till on this occaſion. This ſurpriſe of " Dr. Young, together with what Steele has " ſaid againſt Tickell in relation to this af- " fair, make it highly probable that there " was ſome underhand dealing in that buſi- " neſs; and indeed Tickell himſelf, who is " a very fair worthy man, has ſince, in a " manner, as good as owned it to me. Mr. " POPE.—[When it was introduced into a " converſation between Mr. Tickell and Mr. " Pope by a third perſon, Tickell did not " deny it; which, conſidering his honour " and zeal for his departed friend, was the " ſame as owning it.]".

Upon theſe ſuſpicions, with which Dr. Warburton hints that other circumſtances concurred, Pope always in his *Art of Sinking* quotes this book as the work of Addiſon.

To compare the two tranſlations would be tedious; the palm is now given univerſally to Pope; but I think the firſt lines of Tickell's

kell's were rather to be preferred, and Pope ſeems to have ſince borrowed ſomething from them in the correction of his own.

When the Hanover ſucceſſion was diſputed, Tickell gave what aſſiſtance his pen would ſupply. His *Letter to Avignon* ſtands high among party-poems; it expreſſes contempt without coarſeneſs, and ſuperiority without inſolence. It had the ſucceſs which it deſerved, being five times printed.

He was now intimately united to Mr. Addiſon, who, when he went into Ireland as ſecretary to the lord Sunderland, took him thither, and employed him in publick buſineſs; and when (1717) afterwards he roſe to be ſecretary of ſtate, made him under-ſecretary. Their friendſhip ſeems to have continued without abatement; for when Addiſon died, he left him the charge of publiſhing his works, with a ſolemn recommendation to the patronage of Craggs.

To theſe works he prefixed an elegy on the author, which could owe none of its beauties

beauties to the aſſiſtance which might be ſuſpected to have ſtrengthened or embelliſhed his earlier compoſitions; but neither he nor Addiſon ever produced nobler lines than are contained in the third and fourth paragraphs, nor is a more ſublime or more elegant funeral poem to be found in the whole compaſs of Engliſh literature.

He was afterwards (about 1725) made ſecretary to the Lords Juſtices of Ireland, a place of great honour; in which he continued till 1740, when he died on the twenty-third of April at Bath.

Of the poems yet unmentioned the longeſt is *Kenſington Gardens*, of which the verſification is ſmooth and elegant, but the fiction unſkilfully compounded of Grecian Deities and Gothick Fairies. Neither ſpecies of thoſe exploded Beings could have done much; and when they are brought together, they only make each other contemptible. To Tickell, however, cannot be refuſed a high place among the minor poets; nor ſhould it be forgotten that he was one of the contributors

to the *Spectator*. With reſpect to his perſonal character, he is ſaid to have been a man of gay converſation, at leaſt a temperate lover of wine and company, and in his domeſtick relations without cenſure.

HAMMOND.

# HAMMOND.

# HAMMOND.

OF Mr. HAMMOND, though he be well remembered as a man eſteemed and careſſed by the elegant and great, I was at firſt able to obtain no other memorials than ſuch as are ſupplied by a book called *Cibber's Lives of the Poets*; of which I take this opportunity to teſtify that it was not written, nor, I believe, ever ſeen, by either of the Cibbers; but was the work of Robert Shiels, a native of Scotland, a man of very acute underſtanding, though with little ſcholaſtick education, who, not long after the publication of his work, died in London of a conſumption. His life was virtuous, and his end was pious. Theophilus Cibber, then a priſoner for debt, imparted, as I was told, his name for ten guineas. The manuſcript of Shiels is now in my poſſeſſion.

I have ſince found that Mr. Shiels, though he was no negligent enquirer, has been miſled by falſe accounts; for he relates that James Hammond, the author of the following Elegies, was the ſon of a Turkey merchant, and had ſome office at the prince of Wales's court, till love of a lady, whoſe name was Daſhwood, for a time diſordered his underſtanding. He was unextinguiſhably amorous, and his miſtreſs inexorably cruel.

Of this narrative, part is true, and part falſe. He was the ſecond ſon of Anthony Hammond, a man of note among the wits, poets, and parliamentary orators in the beginning of this century, who was allied to Sir Robert Walpole by marrying his ſiſter. He was born about 1710, and educated at Weſtminſter-ſchool; but it does not appear that he was of any univerſity. He was equerry to the prince of Wales, and ſeems to have come very early into publick notice, and to have been diſtinguiſhed by thoſe whoſe patronage and friendſhip prejudiced mankind at that time in favour of thoſe on whom they were beſtowed; for he was the companion of Cobham, Lyttelton, and Cheſterfield. He is ſaid

to have divided his life between pleaſure and books; in his retirement forgetting the town, and in his gaiety loſing the ſtudent. Of his literary hours all the effects are here exhibited, of which the Elegies were written very early, and the Prologue not long before his death.

In 1741, he was choſen into parliament for Truro in Cornwall, probably one of thoſe who were elected by the Prince's influence; and died next year in June at Stowe, the famous ſeat of the lord Cobham. His miſtreſs long outlived him, and in 1779 died unmarried. The character which her lover bequeathed her was, indeed, not likely to attract courtſhip.

The Elegies were publiſhed after his death; and while the writer's name was remembered with fondneſs, they were read with a reſolution to admire them. The recommendatory preface of the editor, who was then believed, and is now affirmed by Dr. Maty, to be the earl of Cheſterfield, raiſed ſtrong prejudices in their favour.

But

But of the prefacer, whoever he was, it may be reaſonably ſuſpected that he never read the poems; for he profeſſes to value them for a very high ſpecies of excellence, and recommends them as the genuine effuſions of the mind, which expreſs a real paſſion in the language of nature. But the truth is, theſe elegies have neither paſſion, nature, nor manners. Where there is fiction, there is no paſſion; he that deſcribes himſelf as a ſhepherd, and his Neæra or Delia as a ſhepherdeſs, and talks of goats and lambs, feels no paſſion. He that courts his miſtreſs with Roman imagery deſerves to loſe her; for ſhe may with good reaſon ſuſpect his ſincerity. Hammond has few ſentiments drawn from nature, and few images from modern life. He produces nothing but frigid pedantry. It would be hard to find in all his productions three ſtanzas that deſerve to be remembered.

Like other lovers, he threatens the lady with dying; and what then ſhall follow?

Wilt thou in tears thy lover's corſe attend;
With eyes averted light the ſolemn pyre,
Till all around the doleful flames aſcend,
Then, ſlowly ſinking, by degrees expire?

To ſooth the hovering ſoul be thine the care,
With plaintive cries to lead the mournful band,
In ſable weeds the golden vaſe to bear,
And cull my aſhes with thy trembling hand:
Panchaia's odours be their coſtly feaſt,
And all the pride of Aſia's fragrant year,
Give them the treaſures of the fartheſt Eaſt,
And, what is ſtill more precious, give thy tear.

Surely no blame can fall upon the nymph who rejected a ſwain of ſo little meaning.

His verſes are not rugged, but they have no ſweetneſs; they never glide in a ſtream of melody. Why Hammond or other writers have thought the quatrain of ten ſyllables elegiac, it is difficult to tell. The character of the Elegy is gentleneſs and tenuity, but this ſtanza has been pronounced by Dryden, whoſe knowledge of Engliſh metre was not inconſiderable, to be the moſt magnificent of all the meaſures which our language affords.

SOMER-

# SOMERVILE.

# SOMERVILE.

OF Mr. SOMERVILE's life I am not able to ſay any thing that can ſatisfy curioſity.

He was a gentleman whoſe eſtate was in Warwickſhire; his houſe is called Edſton, a ſeat inherited from a long line of anceſtors; for he was ſaid to be of the firſt family in his country. He tells of himſelf, that he was born near the Avon's banks. He was bred at Wincheſter-ſchool, but I know not whether he was of any univerſity. I have never heard of him but as of a poet, a country gentleman, and a ſkilful and uſeful Juſtice of the Peace.

Of the cloſe of his life, thoſe whom his poems have delighted will read with pain the following

following account, copied from the Letters of his friend Shenſtone, by whom he was too much reſembled.

" —Our old friend Somervile is dead! I " did not imagine I could have been ſo ſorry " as I find myſelf on this occaſion.—*Subla-* " *tum quærimus.* I can now excuſe all his " foibles; impute them to age, and to diſ- " treſs of circumſtances: the laſt of theſe " conſiderations wrings my very ſoul to " think on. For a man of high ſpirit, con- " ſcious of having (at leaſt in one produc- " tion) generally pleaſed the world, to be " plagued and threatened by wretches that " are low in every ſenſe; to be forced to " drink himſelf into pains of the body, in " order to get rid of the pains of the mind, " is a miſery."—He died July 14, 1743.

It is with regret that I find myſelf not better enabled to exhibit memorials of a writer, who at leaſt muſt be allowed to have ſet a good example to men of his own claſs, by devoting part of his time to elegant knowledge; and who has ſhewn, by the ſubjects which his poetry has adorned, that it is practicable

tiçable to be at once a ſkilful ſportſman and a man of letters.

Somervile has tried many modes of poetry; and though perhaps he has not in any reached ſuch excellence as to raiſe much envy, it may commonly be ſaid at leaſt, that *he writes very well for a gentleman.* His ſerious pieces are ſometimes elevated, and his trifles are ſometimes elegant. In his verſes to Addiſon the couplet which mentions *Clio* is written with the moſt exquiſite delicacy of praiſe; it exhibits one of thoſe happy ſtrokes that are ſeldom attained. In his Odes to Marlborough there are beautiful lines; but in the ſecond Ode he ſhews that he knew little of his hero, when he talks of his private virtues. His ſubjects are ſuch as require no great depth of thought or energy of expreſſion. His Fables are generally ſtale, and therefore excite no curioſity. Of his favourite, *The Two Springs*, the fiction is unnatural, and the moral inconſequential. In his Tales there is too much coarſeneſs, with too little care of language, and not ſufficient rapidity of narration.

His great work is his *Chaſe*, which he undertook in his maturer age, when his ear was improved to the approbation of blank verſe, of which however his two firſt lines give a bad ſpecimen. To this poem praiſe cannot be totally denied. He is allowed by ſportſmen to write with great intelligence of his ſubject, which is the firſt requiſite to excellence; and though it is impoſſible to intereſt the common readers of verſe in the dangers or pleaſures of the chaſe, he has done all that tranſition and variety could eaſily effect; and has, with great propriety, enlarged his plan by the modes of hunting uſed in other countries.

With ſtill leſs judgement did he chuſe blank verſe as the vehicle of *Rural Sports*. If blank verſe be not tumid and gorgeous, it is crippled proſe; and familiar images in laboured language have nothing to recommend them but abſurd novelty, which, wanting the attractions of Nature, cannot pleaſe long. One excellence of the *Splendid Shilling* is, that it is ſhort. Diſguiſe can gratify no longer than it deceives.

SAVAGE.

# SAVAGE.

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IT has been obſerved in all ages, that the advantages of nature or of fortune have contributed very little to the promotion of happineſs; and that thoſe whom the ſplendour of their rank, or the extent of their capacity, have placed upon the ſummits of human life, have not often given any juſt occaſion to envy in thoſe who look up to them from a lower ſtation: whether it be that apparent ſuperiority incites great deſigns, and great deſigns are naturally liable to fatal miſcarriages; or that the general lot of mankind is miſery, and the misfortunes of thoſe whoſe eminence drew upon them an univerſal attention, have been more carefully recorded, becauſe they were more generally obſerved, and have in reality been only more conſpicuous than

thoſe of others, not more frequent, or more ſevere.

That affluence and power, advantages extrinſic and adventitious, and therefore eaſily ſeparable from thoſe by whom they are poſſeſſed, ſhould very often flatter the mind with expectations of felicity which they cannot give, raiſes no aſtoniſhment; but it ſeems rational to hope, that intellectual greatneſs ſhould produce better effects; that minds qualified for great attainments ſhould firſt endeavour their own benefit; and that they who are moſt able to teach others the way to happineſs, ſhould with moſt certainty follow it themſelves.

But this expectation, however plauſible, has been very frequently diſappointed. The heroes of literary as well as civil hiſtory have been very often no leſs remarkable for what they have atchieved; and volumes have been written only to enumerate the miſeries of the learned, and relate their unhappy lives, and untimely deaths.

To theſe mournful narratives, I am about to add the Life of Richard Savage, a man whoſe

whoſe writings entitle him to an eminent rank in the claſſes of learning, and whoſe misfortunes claim a degree of compaſſion, not always due to the unhappy, as they were often the conſequences of the crimes of others, rather than his own.

In the year 1697, Anne Counteſs of Macclesfield, having lived for ſome time upon very uneaſy terms with her huſband, thought a public confeſſion of adultery the moſt obvious and expeditious method of obtaining her liberty; and therefore declared, that the child, with which ſhe was then great, was begotten by the Earl Rivers. This, as may be imagined, made her huſband no leſs deſirous of a ſeparation than herſelf, and he proſecuted his deſign in the moſt effectual manner; for he applied not to the eccleſiaſtical courts for a divorce, but to the parliament for an act, by which his marriage might be diſſolved, the nuptial contract totally annulled, and the children of his wife illegitimated. This act, after the uſual deliberation, he obtained, though without the approbation of ſome, who conſidered marriage as an affair only cognizable by eccleſiaſ-

tical judges*; and on March 3d was ſeparated from his wife, whoſe fortune, which was very great, was repaid her; and who having, as well as her huſband, the liberty of making another choice, was in a ſhort time married to Colonel Brett.

While the Earl of Macclesfield was proſecuting this affair, his wife was, on the 10th of January 1697-8, delivered of a ſon, and the Earl Rivers, by appearing to conſider him as his own, left none any reaſon to doubt of the ſincerity of her declaration; for he was his godfather, and gave him his own name, which was by his direction inſerted in the regiſter of St. Andrew's pariſh in Holborn, but unfortunately left him to the care of his

* This year was made remarkable by the diſſolution of a marriage ſolemnized in the face of the church. SALMON'S REVIEW.

The following proteſt is regiſtered in the books of the Houſe of Lords.

Diſſentient.

Becauſe we conceive that this is the firſt bill of that nature that hath paſſed, where there was not a divorce firſt obtained in the Spiritual Court; which we look upon as an ill precedent, and may be of dangerous conſequence in the future.

HALIFAX. ROCHESTER.

mother, whom, as ſhe was now ſet free from her huſband, he probably imagined likely to treat with great tenderneſs the child that had contributed to ſo pleaſing an event. It is not indeed eaſy to diſcover what motives could be found to over-balance that natural affection of a parent, or what intereſt could be promoted by neglect or cruelty. The dread of ſhame or of poverty, by which ſome wretches have been incited to abandon or to murder their children, cannot be ſuppoſed to have affected a woman who had proclaimed her crimes and ſolicited reproach, and on whom the clemency of the legiſlature had undeſervedly beſtowed a fortune, which would have been very little diminiſhed by the expences which the care of her child could have brought upon her. It was therefore not likely that ſhe would be wicked without temptation, that ſhe would look upon her ſon from his birth with a kind of reſentment and abhorrence; and, inſtead of ſupporting, aſſiſting, and defending him, delight to ſee him ſtruggling with miſery, or that ſhe would take every opportunity of aggravating his misfortunes, and obſtructing his reſources, and with an implacable and reſtleſs

reſtleſs cruelty continue her perſecution from the firſt hour of his life to the laſt.

But whatever were her motives, no ſooner was her ſon born, than ſhe diſcovered a reſolution of diſowning him; and in a very ſhort time removed him from her ſight, by committing him to the care of a poor woman, whom ſhe directed to educate him as her own, and injoined never to inform him of his true parents.

Such was the beginning of the life of Richard Savage. Born with a legal claim to honour and to affluence, he was in two months illegitimated by the parliament, and diſowned by his mother, doomed to poverty and obſcurity, and launched upon the ocean of life, only that he might be ſwallowed by its quick-ſands, or daſhed upon its rocks.

His mother could not indeed infect others with the ſame cruelty. As it was impoſſible to avoid the inquiries which the curioſity or tenderneſs of her relations made after her child, ſhe was obliged to give ſome account

of

of the meaſures that ſhe had taken; and her mother, the Lady Maſon, whether in approbation of her deſign, or to prevent more criminal contrivances, engaged to tranſact with the nurſe, to pay her for her care, and to ſuperintend the education of the child.

In this charitable office ſhe was aſſiſted by his godmother Mrs. Lloyd, who, while ſhe lived, always looked upon him with that tenderneſs, which the barbarity of his mother made peculiarly neceſſary; but her death, which happened in his tenth year, was another of the misfortunes of his childhood; for though ſhe kindly endeavoured to alleviate his loſs by a legacy of three hundred pounds, yet, as he had none to proſecute his claim, to ſhelter him from oppreſſion, or call in law to the aſſiſtance of juſtice, her will was eluded by the executors, and no part of the money was ever paid.

He was, however, not yet wholly abandoned. The Lady Maſon ſtill continued her care, and directed him to be placed at a ſmall grammar-ſchool near St. Alban's, where he was called by the name of his nurſe, without

out the leaſt intimation that he had a claim to any other.

Here he was initiated in literature, and paſſed through ſeveral of the claſſes, with what rapidity or what applauſe cannot now be known. As he always ſpoke with reſpect of his maſter, it is probable that the mean rank, in which he then appeared, did not hinder his genius from being diſtinguiſhed, or his induſtry from being rewarded; and if in ſo low a ſtate he obtained diſtinction and rewards, it is not likely that they were gained but by genius and induſtry.

It is very reaſonable to conjecture, that his application was equal to his abilities, becauſe his improvement was more than proportioned to the opportunities which he enjoyed; nor can it be doubted, that if his earlieſt productions had been preſerved, like thoſe of happier ſtudents, we might in ſome have found vigorous ſallies of that ſprightly humour, which diſtinguiſhes *The Author to be let*, and in others ſtrong touches of that ardent imagination which painted the ſolemn ſcenes of *The Wanderer*.

While

While he was thus cultivating his genius, his father the Earl Rivers was ſeized with a diſtemper, which in a ſhort time put an end to his life. He had frequently inquired after his ſon, and had always been amuſed with fallacious and evaſive anſwers; but, being now in his own opinion on his death-bed, he thought it his duty to provide for him among his other natural children, and therefore demanded a poſitive account of him, with an importunity not to be diverted or denied. His mother, who could no longer refuſe an anſwer, determined at leaſt to give ſuch as ſhould cut him off for ever from that happineſs which competence affords, and therefore declared that he was dead; which is perhaps the firſt inſtance of a lye invented by a mother to deprive her ſon of a proviſion which was deſigned him by another, and which ſhe could not expect herſelf, though he ſhould loſe it.

This was therefore an act of wickedneſs which could not be defeated, becauſe it could not be ſuſpected; the Earl did not imagine that there could exiſt in a human form a mother that would ruin her ſon without en-

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riching herſelf, and therefore beſtowed upon ſome other perſon ſix thouſand pounds, which he had in his will bequeathed to Savage.

The ſame cruelty which incited his mother to intercept this proviſion which had been intended him, prompted her in a ſhort time to another project, a project worthy of ſuch a diſpoſition. She endeavoured to rid herſelf from the danger of being at any time made known to him, by ſending him ſecretly to the American plantations*.

By whoſe kindneſs this ſcheme was counteracted, or by what interpoſition ſhe was induced to lay aſide her deſign, I know not; it is not improbable that the Lady Maſon might perſuade or compel her to deſiſt, or perhaps ſhe could not eaſily find accomplices wicked enough to concur in ſo cruel an action; for it may be conceived, that thoſe who had by a long gradation of guilt hardened their hearts againſt the ſenſe of common wickedneſs, would yet be ſhocked at the deſign of a mother to expoſe her ſon to ſlavery and want, to expoſe him without intereſt, and

* Savage's Preface to his Miſcellany.

without provocation; and Savage might on this occaſion find protectors and advocates among thoſe who had long traded in crimes, and whom compaſſion had never touched before.

Being hindered, by whatever means, from baniſhing him into another country, ſhe formed ſoon after a ſcheme for burying him in poverty and obſcurity in his own; and, that his ſtation of life, if not the place of his reſidence, might keep him for ever at a diſtance from her, ſhe ordered him to be placed with a ſhoemaker in Holborn, that, after the uſual time of trial, he might become his apprentice *.

It is generally reported, that this project was for ſome time ſucceſsful, and that Savage was employed at the awl longer than he was willing to confeſs; nor was it perhaps any great advantage to him, that an unexpected diſcovery determined him to quit his occupation.

About this time his nurſe, who had always treated him as her own ſon, died; and it was natural for him to take care of thoſe effects,

* Preface to Savage's Miſcellanies.

which

which by her death were, as he imagined, become his own; he therefore went to her houſe, opened her boxes, and examined her papers, among which he found ſome letters written to her by the Lady Maſon, which informed him of his birth, and the reaſons for which it was concealed.

He was no longer ſatisfied with the employment which had been allotted him, but thought he had a right to ſhare the affluence of his mother; and therefore without ſcruple applied to her as her ſon, and made uſe of every art to awaken her tenderneſs, and attract her regard. But neither his letters, nor the interpoſition of thoſe friends which his merit or his diſtreſs procured him, made any impreſſion upon her mind. She ſtill reſolved to neglect, though ſhe could no longer diſown him.

It was to no purpoſe that he frequently ſolicited her to admit him to ſee her; ſhe avoided him with the moſt vigilant precaution, and ordered him to be excluded from her houſe, by whomſoever he might be introduced, and what reaſon ſoever he might give for entering it.

Savage

Savage was at the ſame time ſo touched with the diſcovery of his real mother, that it was his frequent practice to walk in the dark evenings * for ſeveral hours before her door, in hopes of ſeeing her as ſhe might come by accident to the window, or croſs her apartment with a candle in her hand.

But all his aſſiduity and tenderneſs were without effect, for he could neither ſoften her heart, nor open her hand, and was reduced to the utmoſt miſeries of want, while he was endeavouring to awaken the affection of a mother: He was therefore obliged to ſeek ſome other means of ſupport; and, having no profeſſion, became by neceſſity an author.

At this time the attention of all the literary world was engroſſed by the Bangorian controverſy, which filled the preſs with pamphlets, and the coffee-houſes with diſputants. Of this ſubject, as moſt popular, he made choice for his firſt attempt, and, without any other knowledge of the queſtion than he had caſually collected from converſation, publiſhed a poem againſt the Biſhop.

* See the Plain Dealer.

What was the ſucceſs or merit of this performance, I know not; it was probably loſt among the innumerable pamphlets to which that diſpute gave occaſion. Mr. Savage was himſelf in a little time aſhamed of it, and endeavoured to ſuppreſs it, by deſtroying all the copies that he could collect.

He then attempted a more gainful kind of writing *, and in his eighteenth year offered to the ſtage a comedy borrowed from a Spaniſh plot, which was refuſed by the players, and was therefore given by him to Mr. Bullock, who, having more intereſt, made ſome ſlight alterations, and brought it upon the ſtage, under the title of †WOMAN'S A RIDDLE, but allowed the unhappy author no part of the profit.

Not diſcouraged however at his repulſe, he wrote two years afterwards LOVE IN A VEIL, another comedy, borrowed likewiſe from the Spaniſh, but with little better ſucceſs than before; for though it was received and acted,

* Jacob's Lives of Dramatic Poets.

† This play was printed firſt in 8vo; and afterwards in 12mo, the fifth edition.

yet it appeared ſo late in the year, that the author obtained no other advantage from it, than the acquaintance of Sir Richard Steele, and Mr. Wilks; by whom he was pitied, careſſed, and relieved.

Sir Richard Steele, having declared in his favour with all the ardour of benevolence which conſtituted his character, promoted his intereſt with the utmoſt zeal, related his misfortunes, applauded his merit, took all the opportunities of recommending him, and aſſerted, that * "the inhumanity of his mother had "given him a right to find every good man "his father."

Nor was Mr. Savage admitted to his acquaintance only, but to his confidence, of which he ſometimes related an inſtance too extraordinary to be omitted, as it affords a very juſt idea of his patron's character.

He was once deſired by Sir Richard, with an air of the utmoſt importance, to come very early to his houſe the next morning. Mr. Savage came as he had promiſed, found the

* Plain Dealer.

chariot at the door, and Sir Richard waiting for him, and ready to go out. What was intended, and whither they were to go, Savage could not conjecture, and was not willing to enquire; but immediately ſeated himſelf with Sir Richard; the coachman was ordered to drive, and they hurried with the utmoſt expedition to Hyde-Park Corner, where they ſtopped at a petty tavern, and retired to a private room. Sir Richard then informed him, that he intended to publiſh a pamphlet, and that he had deſired him to come thither that he might write for him. They ſoon ſat down to the work. Sir Richard dictated, and Savage wrote, till the dinner that had been ordered was put upon the table. Savage was ſurprized at the meanneſs of the entertainment, and after ſome heſitation ventured to aſk for wine, which Sir Richard, not without reluctance, ordered to be brought. They then finiſhed their dinner, and proceeded in their pamphlet, which they concluded in the afternoon.

Mr. Savage then imagined his taſk over, and expected that Sir Richard would call for the reckoning, and return home; but his expecta-

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tions deceived him, for Sir Richard told him, that he was without money, and that the pamphlet muſt be ſold before the dinner could be paid for; and Savage was therefore obliged to go and offer their new production to ſale for two guineas, which with ſome difficulty he obtained. Sir Richard then returned home, having retired that day only to avoid his creditors, and compoſed the pamphlet only to diſcharge his reckoning.

Mr. Savage related another fact equally uncommon, which, though it has no relation to his life, ought to be preſerved. Sir Richard Steele having one day invited to his houſe a great number of perſons of the firſt quality, they were ſurprized at the number of liveries which ſurrounded the table; and after dinner, when wine and mirth had ſet them free from the obſervation of rigid ceremony, one of them enquired of Sir Richard, how ſuch an expenſive train of domeſtics could be conſiſtent with his fortune. Sir Richard very frankly confeſſed, that they were fellows of whom he would very willingly be rid. And being then aſked, why he did not diſcharge them, declared that they were bailiffs who had intro-

duced themſelves with an execution, and whom, ſince he could not ſend them away, he had thought it convenient to embelliſh with liveries, that they might do him credit while they ſtaid.

His friends were diverted with the expedient, and, by paying the debt, diſcharged their attendance, having obliged Sir Richard to promiſe that they ſhould never again find him graced with a retinue of the ſame kind.

Under ſuch a tutor, Mr. Savage was not likely to learn prudence or frugality; and perhaps many of the misfortunes, which the want of thoſe virtues brought upon him in the following parts of his life, might be juſtly imputed to ſo unimproving an example.

Nor did the kindneſs of Sir Richard end in common favours. He propoſed to have eſtabliſhed him in ſome ſettled ſcheme of life, and to have contracted a kind of alliance with him, by marrying him to a natural daughter, on whom he intended to beſtow a thouſand pounds. But though he was always laviſh of future bounties, he conducted his affairs in ſuch a manner, that he was very ſeldom able

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to keep his promiſes, or execute his own intentions; and, as he was never able to raiſe the ſum which he had offered, the marriage was delayed. In the mean time he was officiouſly informed, that Mr. Savage had ridiculed him; by which he was ſo much exaſperated, that he withdrew the allowance which he had paid him, and never afterwards admitted him to his houſe.

It is not indeed unlikely that Savage might, by his imprudence, expoſe himſelf to the malice of a tale-bearer; for his patron had many follies, which, as his diſcernment eaſily diſcovered, his imagination might ſometimes incite him to mention too ludicrouſly. A little knowledge of the world is ſufficient to diſcover that ſuch weakneſs is very common, and that there are few who do not ſometimes, in the wantonneſs of thoughtleſs mirth, or the heat of tranſient reſentment, ſpeak of their friends and benefactors with levity and contempt, though in their cooler moments they want neither ſenſe of their kindneſs, nor reverence for their virtue. The fault therefore of Mr. Savage was rather negligence than ingratitude; but Sir Richard muſt likewiſe

wiſe be acquitted of ſeverity, for who is there that can patiently bear contempt from one whom he has relieved and ſupported, whoſe eſtabliſhment he has laboured, and whoſe intereſt he has promoted?

He was now again abandoned to fortune, without any other friend than Mr. Wilks; a man, who, whatever were his abilities or ſkill as an actor, deſerves at leaſt to be remembered for his virtues*, which are not

* As it is a loſs to mankind when any good action is forgotten, I ſhall inſert another inſtance of Mr. Wilks's generoſity, very little known. Mr. Smith, a gentleman educated at Dublin, being hindered by an impediment in his pronunciation from engaging in orders, for which his friends deſigned him, left his own country, and came to London in queſt of employment, but found his ſolicitations fruitleſs, and his neceſſities every day more preſſing. In this diſtreſs he wrote a tragedy, and offered it to the players, by whom it was rejected. Thus were his laſt hopes defeated, and he had no other proſpect than of the moſt deplorable poverty. But Mr. Wilks thought his performance, though not perfect, at leaſt worthy of ſome reward, and therefore offered him a benefit. This favour he improved with ſo much diligence, that the houſe afforded him a conſiderable ſum, with which he went to Leyden, applied himſelf to the ſtudy of phyſic; and proſecuted his deſign with ſo much diligence and ſucceſs, that, when Dr. Boerhaave was deſired by the Czarina to recommend proper perſons to introduce into Ruſſia the practice and ſtudy of phyſic, Dr. Smith was one of thoſe whom he ſelected. He had a conſiderable penſion ſettled on him at his arrival, and was one of the chief phyſicians at the Ruſſian court.

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often to be found in the world, and perhaps leſs often in his profeſſion than in others. To be humane, generous, and candid, is a very high degree of merit in any caſe; but thoſe qualities deſerve ſtill greater praiſe, when they are found in that condition, which makes almoſt every other man, for whatever reaſon, contemptuous, inſolent, petulant, ſelfiſh, and brutal.

As Mr. Wilks was one of thoſe to whom calamity ſeldom complained without relief, he naturally took an unfortunate wit into his protection, and not only aſſiſted him in any caſual diſtreſſes, but continued an equal and ſteady kindneſs to the time of his death.

By his interpoſition Mr. Savage once obtained from his mother* fifty pounds, and a promiſe of one hundred and fifty more; but it was the fate of this unhappy man, that few promiſes of any advantage to him were performed. His mother was infected among others with the general madneſs of the South

* This I write upon the credit of the author of his life, which was publiſhed 1727.

Sea

Sea traffic; and, having been diſappointed in her expectations, refuſed to pay what perhaps nothing but the proſpect of ſudden affluence prompted her to promiſe.

Being thus obliged to depend upon the friendſhip of Mr. Wilks, he was conſequently an aſſiduous frequenter of the theatres; and in a ſhort time the amuſements of the ſtage took ſuch poſſeſſion of his mind, that he never was abſent from a play in ſeveral years.

This conſtant attendance naturally procured him the acquaintance of the players, and, among others, of Mrs. Oldfield, who was ſo much pleaſed with his converſation, and touched with his misfortunes, that ſhe allowed him a ſettled penſion of fifty pounds a year, which was during her life regularly paid.

That this act of generoſity may receive its due praiſe, and that the good actions of Mrs. Oldfield may not be ſullied by her general character, it is proper to mention what Mr. Savage often declared in the ſtrongeſt terms, that he never ſaw her alone, or in any other place than behind the ſcenes.

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At her death he endeavoured to ſhew his gratitude in the moſt decent manner, by wearing mourning as for a mother; but did not celebrate her in elegies, becauſe he knew that too great profuſion of praiſe would only have revived thoſe faults which his natural equity did not allow him to think leſs, becauſe they were committed by one who favoured him; but of which, though his virtue would not endeavour to palliate them, his gratitude would not ſuffer him to prolong the memory, or diffuſe the cenſure.

In his *Wanderer*, he has indeed taken an opportunity of mentioning her, but celebrates her not for her virtue, but her beauty, an excellence which none ever denied her: this is the only encomium with which he has rewarded her liberality, and perhaps he has even in this been too laviſh of his praiſe. He ſeems to have thought, that never to mention his benefactreſs would have an appearance of ingratitude, though to have dedicated any particular performance to her memory would have only betrayed an officious partiality, that, without exalting her character, would have depreſſed his own.

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He had ſometimes, by the kindneſs of Mr. Wilks, the advantage of a benefit, on which occaſions he often received uncommon marks of regard and compaſſion; and was once told by the Duke of Dorſet, that it was juſt to conſider him as an injured nobleman, and that in his opinion the nobility ought to think themſelves obliged, without ſolicitation, to take every opportunity of ſupporting him by their countenance and patronage. But he had generally the mortification to hear that the whole intereſt of his mother was employed to fruſtrate his applications, and that ſhe never left any expedient untried, by which he might be cut off from the poſſibility of ſupporting life. The ſame diſpoſition ſhe endeavoured to diffuſe among all thoſe over whom nature or fortune gave her any influence, and indeed ſucceeded too well in her deſign; but could not always propagate her effrontery with her cruelty, for ſome of thoſe, whom ſhe incited againſt him, were aſhamed of their own conduct, and boaſted of that relief which they never gave him.

In this cenſure I do not indiſcriminately involve all his relations; for he has mention-

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ed with gratitude the humanity of one Lady, whoſe name I am now unable to recollect, and to whom, therefore I cannot pay the praiſes which ſhe deſerves for having acted well in oppoſition to influence, precept, and example.

The puniſhment which our laws inflict upon thoſe parents who murder their infants is well known, nor has its juſtice ever been conteſted; but if they deſerve death who deſtroy a child in its birth, what pains can be ſevere enough for her who forbears to deſtroy him only to inflict ſharper miſeries upon him; who prolongs his life only to make him miſerable; and who expoſes him, without care and without pity, to the malice of oppreſſion, the caprices of chance, and the temptations of poverty; who rejoices to ſee him overwhelmed with calamities; and, when his own induſtry, or the charity of others, has enabled him to riſe for a ſhort time above his miſeries, plunges him again into his former diſtreſs?

The kindneſs of his friends not affording him any conſtant ſupply, and the proſpect of improving

improving his fortune by enlarging his acquaintance neceſſarily leading him to places of expence, he found it neceſſary * to endeavour once more at dramatic poetry, for which he was now better qualified by a more extenſive knowledge, and longer obſervation. But having been unſucceſsful in comedy, though rather for want of opportunities than genius, he reſolved now to try whether he ſhould not be more fortunate in exhibiting a tragedy.

The ſtory which he choſe for the ſubject, was that of Sir Thomas Overbury, a ſtory well adapted to the ſtage, though perhaps not far enough removed from the preſent age, to admit properly the fictions neceſſary to complete the plan: for the mind, which naturally loves truth, is always moſt offended with the violation of thoſe truths of which we are moſt certain; and we of courſe conceive thoſe facts moſt certain, which approach neareſt to our own time.

Out of this ſtory he formed a tragedy, which, if the circumſtances in which he wrote

* In 1724.

it

it be conſidered, will afford at once an uncommon proof of ſtrength of genius, and evenneſs of mind, of a ſerenity not to be ruffled, and an imagination not to be ſuppreſſed.

During a conſiderable part of the time in which he was employed upon this performance, he was without lodging, and often without meat; nor had he any other conveniences for ſtudy than the fields or the ſtreet allowed him; there he uſed to walk and form his ſpeeches, and afterwards ſtep into a ſhop, beg for a few moments the uſe of the pen and ink, and write down what he had compoſed, upon paper which he had picked up by accident.

If the performance of a writer thus diſtreſſed is not perfect, its faults ought ſurely to be imputed to a cauſe very different from want of genius, and muſt rather excite pity than provoke cenſure.

But when under theſe diſcouragements the tragedy was finiſhed, there yet remained the labour of introducing it on the ſtage, an undertaking,

dertaking, which, to an ingenuous mind, was in a very high degree vexatious and diſguſting; for, having little intereſt or reputation, he was obliged to ſubmit himſelf wholly to the players, and admit, with whatever reluctance, the emendations of Mr. Cibber, which he always conſidered as the diſgrace of his performance.

He had indeed in Mr. Hill another critic of a very different claſs, from whoſe friendſhip he received great aſſiſtance on many occaſions, and whom he never mentioned but with the utmoſt tenderneſs and regard. He had been for ſome time diſtinguiſhed by him with very particular kindneſs, and on this occaſion it was natural to apply to him as an author of an eſtabliſhed character. He therefore ſent this tragedy to him, with a ſhort copy of * verſes, in which he deſired his correction. Mr. Hill, whoſe humanity and politeneſs are generally known, readily complied with his requeſt; but as he is remarkable for ſingularity of ſentiment, and bold experiments in language, Mr. Savage did not

* Printed in the late collection of his poems.

think

think his play much improved by his innovation, and had even at that time the courage to reject ſeveral paſſages which he could not approve; and, what is ſtill more laudable, Mr. Hill had the generoſity not to reſent the neglect of his alterations, but wrote the prologue and epilogue, in which he touches on the circumſtances of the author with great tenderneſs.

After all theſe obſtructions and compliances, he was only able to bring his play upon the ſtage in the ſummer, when the chief actors had retired, and the reſt were in poſſeſſion of the houſe for their own advantage. Among theſe, Mr. Savage was admitted to play the part of Sir Thomas Overbury, by which he gained no great reputation, the theatre being a province for which nature ſeemed not to have deſigned him; for neither his voice, look, nor geſture, were ſuch as were expected on the ſtage; and he was ſo much aſhamed of having been reduced to appear as a player, that he always blotted out his name from the liſt, when a copy of his tragedy was to be ſhown to his friends.

In the publication of his performance he was more ſucceſsful, for the rays of genius that glimmered in it, that glimmered through all the miſts which poverty and Cibber had been able to ſpread over it, procured him the notice and eſteem of many perſons eminent for their rank, their virtue, and their wit.

Of this play, acted, printed, and dedicated, the accumulated profits aroſe to an hundred pounds, which he thought at that time a very large ſum, having been never maſter of ſo much before.

In the Dedication*, for which he received ten guineas, there is nothing remarkable. The Preface contains a very liberal encomium on the blooming excellencies of Mr. Theophilus Cibber, which Mr. Savage could not in the latter part of his life ſee his friends about to read without ſnatching the play out of their hands. The generoſity of Mr. Hill did not end on this occaſion; for afterwards, when Mr. Savage's neceſſities returned, he encouraged a ſubſcription to a Miſcellany of

* To Herbert Tryſt, Eſq. of Herefordſhire.

Poems

Poems in a very extraordinary manner, by publiſhing his ſtory in the *Plain Dealer**, with ſome affecting lines, which he aſſerts to have been written by Mr. Savage upon the treatment received by him from his mother, but of which he was himſelf the author, as Mr. Savage afterwards declared. Theſe lines, and the paper in which they were inſerted, had a very powerful effect upon all but his mother, whom, by making her cruelty more public, they only hardened in her averſion.

Mr. Hill not only promoted the ſubſcription to the Miſcellany, but furniſhed likewiſe the greateſt part of the Poems of which it is compoſed, and particularly *The Happy Man*, which he publiſhed as a ſpecimen.

The ſubſcriptions of thoſe whom theſe papers ſhould influence to patronize merit in diſtreſs, without any other ſolicitation, were directed to be left at Button's coffee-

* The *Plain Dealer* was a periodical paper, written by Mr. Hill and Mr. Bond, whom Mr. Savage called the two contending powers of light and darkneſs. They wrote by turns each ſix Eſſays; and the character of the work was obſerved regularly to riſe in Mr. Hill's weeks, and fall in Mr. Bond's.

houſe; and Mr. Savage going thither a few days afterwards, without expectation of any effect from his propoſal, found to his ſurpriſe ſeventy guineas*, which had been ſent him in conſequence of the compaſſion excited by Mr. Hill's pathetic repreſentation.

To this Miſcellany he wrote a Preface, in which he gives an account of his mother's cruelty in a very uncommon ſtrain of humour, and with a gaiety of imagination, which the ſucceſs of his ſubſcription probably produced.

The Dedication is addreſſed to the Lady Mary Wortley Montague, whom he flatters without reſerve, and, to confeſs the truth, with very little † art. The ſame obſervation may

* The names of thoſe who ſo generouſly contributed to his relief, having been mentioned in a former account, ought not to be omitted here. They were the Ducheſs of Cleveland, Lady Cheyney, Lady Caſtlemain, Lady Gower, Lady Lechmere, the Dutcheſs Dowager and Dutcheſs of Rutland, Lady Strafford, the Counteſs Dowager of Warwick, Mrs. Mary Floyer, Mrs. Sofuel Noel, Duke of Rutland, Lord Gainſborough, Lord Milſington, Mr. John Savage.

† This the following extract from it will prove.

—"Since our country has been honoured with the glory of "your wit, as elevated and immortal as your ſoul, it no "longer

may be extended to all his Dedications: his compliments are conſtrained and violent, heaped together without the grace of order, or the decency of introduction: he ſeems to have written his Panegyrics for the peruſal only of his patrons, and to have imagined that he had no other taſk than to pamper them with praiſes however groſs, and that flattery would make its way to the heart, without the aſſiſtance of elegance or invention.

Soon afterwards, the death of the king furniſhed a general ſubject for a poetical conteſt, in which Mr. Savage engaged, and is allowed to have carried the prize of honour from his competitors; but I know not whether he gained

" longer remains a doubt whether your ſex have ſtrength of " mind in proportion to their ſweetneſs. There is ſomething " in your verſes as diſtinguiſhed as your air.—They are as " ſtrong as truth, as deep as reaſon, as clear as innocence, " and as ſmooth as beauty—They contain a nameleſs and " peculiar mixture of force and grace, which is at once ſo " movingly ſerene, and ſo majeſtically lovely, that it is too " amiable to appear any where but in your eyes and in your " writings.

" As fortune is not more my enemy than I am the enemy " of flattery, I know not how I can forbear this application " to your Ladyſhip, becauſe there is ſcarce a poſſibility that " I ſhould ſay more than I believe, when I am ſpeaking of " your Excellence."—

by his performance any other advantage than the increaſe of his reputation; though it muſt certainly have been with farther views that he prevailed upon himſelf to attempt a ſpecies of writing, of which all the topics had been long before exhauſted, and which was made at once difficult by the multitudes that had failed in it, and thoſe that had ſucceeded.

He was now advancing in reputation, and though frequently involved in very diſtreſsful perplexities, appeared however to be gaining upon mankind, when both his fame and his life were endangered by an event, of which it is not yet determined, whether it ought to be mentioned as a crime or a calamity.

On the 20th of November 1727, Mr. Savage came from Richmond, where he then lodged, that he might purſue his ſtudies with leſs interruption, with an intent to diſcharge another lodging which he had in Weſtminſter; and accidentally meeting two gentlemen his acquaintances, whoſe names were Merchant and Gregory, he went in with them to a neighbouring coffee-houſe, and ſat drinking

drinking till it was late, it being in no time of Mr. Savage's life any part of his character to be the firſt of the company that deſired to ſeparate. He would willingly have gone to bed in the ſame houſe; but there was not room for the whole company, and therefore they agreed to ramble about the ſtreets, and divert themſelves with ſuch amuſements as ſhould offer themſelves till morning.

In this walk they happened unluckily to diſcover a light in Robinſon's coffee-houſe, near Charing-croſs, and therefore went in. Merchant, with ſome rudeneſs, demanded a room, and was told that there was a good fire in the next parlour, which the company were about to leave, being then paying their reckoning. Merchant, not ſatisfied with this anſwer, ruſhed into the room, and was followed by his companions. He then petulantly placed himſelf between the company and the fire, and ſoon after kicked down the table. This produced a quarrel, ſwords were drawn on both ſides, and one Mr. James Sinclair was killed. Savage, having wounded likewiſe a maid that held him, forced

his way with Merchant out of the houſe; but being intimidated and confuſed, without reſolution either to fly or ſtay, they were taken in a back-court by one of the company and ſome ſoldiers, whom he had called to his aſſiſtance.

Being ſecured and guarded that night, they were in the morning carried before three juſtices, who committed them to the Gate-houſe, from whence, upon the death of Mr. Sinclair, which happened the ſame day, they were removed in the night to Newgate, where they were however treated with ſome diſtinction, exempted from the ignominy of chains, and confined, not among the common criminals, but in the Preſs-yard.

When the day of trial came, the court was crouded in a very unuſual manner, and the public appeared to intereſt itſelf as in a cauſe of general concern. The witneſſes againſt Mr. Savage and his friends were, the woman who kept the houſe, which was a houſe of ill fame, and her maid, the men who were in the room with Mr. Sinclair, and a woman of the town, who had been drinking with them,

them, and with whom one of them had been ſeen in bed. They ſwore in general, that Merchant gave the provocation, which Savage and Gregory drew their ſwords to juſtify; that Savage drew firſt, and that he ſtabbed Sinclair when he was not in a poſture of defence, or while Gregory commanded his ſword; that after he had given the thruſt he turned pale, and would have retired, but that the maid clung round him, and one of the company endeavoured to detain him, from whom he broke, by cutting the maid on the head, but was afterwards taken in a court.

There was ſome difference in their depoſitions; one did not ſee Savage give the wound, another ſaw it given when Sinclair held his point towards the ground; and the woman of the town aſſerted, that ſhe did not ſee Sinclair's ſword at all: this difference however was very far from amounting to inconſiſtency; but it was ſufficient to ſhew, that the hurry of the diſpute was ſuch, that it was not eaſy to diſcover the truth with relation to particular circumſtances, and that therefore

ſome

ſome deductions were to be made from the credibility of the teſtimonies.

Sinclair had declared ſeveral times before his death, that he received his wound from Savage, nor did Savage at his trial deny the fact, but endeavoured partly to extenuate it, by urging the ſuddenneſs of the whole action, and the impoſſibility of any ill deſign, or premeditated malice, and partly to juſtify it by the neceſſity of ſelf-defence, and the hazard of his own life, if he had loſt that opportunity of giving the thruſt: he obſerved, that neither reaſon nor law obliged a man to wait for the blow which was threatened, and which, if he ſhould ſuffer it, he might never be able to return, that it was always allowable to prevent an aſſault, and to preſerve life by taking away that of the adverſary, by whom it was endangered.

With regard to the violence with which he endeavoured to eſcape, he declared, that it was not his deſign to fly from juſtice, or decline a trial, but to avoid the expences and ſeverities of a priſon; and that he intended to have appeared at the bar without compulſion.

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This defence, which took up more than an hour, was heard by the multitude that thronged the court with the moſt attentive and reſpectful ſilence: thoſe who thought he ought not to be acquitted, owned that applauſe could not be refuſed him; and thoſe who before pitied his misfortunes, now reverenced his abilities.

The witneſſes which appeared againſt him were proved to be perſons of characters which did not entitle them to much credit; a common ſtrumpet, a woman by whom ſtrumpets were entertained, and a man by whom they were ſupported; and the character of Savage was by ſeveral perſons of diſtinction aſſerted to be that of a modeſt inoffenſive man, not inclined to broils, or to inſolence, and who had, to that time, been only known for his misfortunes and his wit.

Had his audience been his judges, he had undoubtedly been acquitted; but Mr. Page, who was then upon the bench, treated him with his uſual inſolence and ſeverity, and when he had ſummed up the evidence, endeavoured

to

to exaſperate the jury, as Mr. Savage uſed to relate it, with this eloquent harangue:

'Gentlemen of the jury, you are to conſider that Mr. Savage is a very great man, a much greater man than you or I, gentlemen of the jury; that he wears very fine clothes, much finer clothes than you or I, gentlemen of the jury; that he has abundance of money in his pocket, much more money than you or I, gentlemen of the jury; but, gentlemen of the jury, is it not a very hard caſe, gentlemen of the jury, that Mr. Savage ſhould therefore kill you or me, gentlemen of the jury?'

Mr. Savage, hearing his defence thus miſrepreſented, and the men who were to decide his fate incited againſt him by invidious compariſons, reſolutely aſſerted, that his cauſe was not candidly explained, and began to recapitulate what he had before ſaid with regard to his condition, and the neceſſity of endeavouring to eſcape the expences of impriſonment; but the judge having ordered him to be ſilent, and repeated his orders without effect, com-

manded that he ſhould be taken from the bar by force.

The jury then heard the opinion of the judge, that good characters were of no weight againſt poſitive evidence, though they might turn the ſcale where it was doubtful; and that though, when two men attack each other, the death of either is only manſlaughter; but where one is the aggreſſor, as in the caſe before them, and, in purſuance of his firſt attack, kills the other, the law ſuppoſes the action, however ſudden, to be malicious. They then deliberated upon their verdict, and determined that Mr. Savage and Mr. Gregory were guilty of murder, and Mr. Merchant, who had no ſword, only of manſlaughter.

Thus ended this memorable trial, which laſted eight hours. Mr. Savage and Mr. Gregory were conducted back to priſon, where they were more cloſely confined, and loaded with irons of fifty pounds weight: four days afterwards they were ſent back to the court to receive ſentence; on which occaſion Mr. Savage

Savage made, as far as it could be retained in memory, the following ſpeech.

" It is now, my Lord, too late to offer any " thing by way of defence or vindication; " nor can we expect from your Lordſhips, in " this court, but the ſentence which the law " requires you, as judges, to pronounce againſt " men of our calamitous condition.—But we " are alſo perſuaded, that as mere men, and " out of this ſeat of rigorous juſtice, you are " ſuſceptive of the tender paſſions, and too " humane, not to commiſerate the unhappy " ſituation of thoſe, whom the law ſometimes " perhaps—exacts—from you to pronounce " upon. No doubt you diſtinguiſh between " offences, which ariſe out of premeditation, " and a diſpoſition habituated to vice or im- " morality, and tranſgreſſions, which are the " unhappy and unforeſeen effects of caſual " abſence of reaſon, and ſudden impulſe of " paſſion: we therefore hope you will contri- " bute all you can to an extenſion of that " mercy, which the gentlemen of the jury " have been pleaſed to ſhew Mr. Merchant, " who (allowing facts as ſworn againſt us by

"the evidence) has led us into this our cala-
"mity. I hope this will not be conſtrued,
"as if we meant to reflect upon that gentle-
"man, or remove any thing from us upon
"him, or that we repine the more at our fate,
"becauſe he has no participation of it: No,
"my Lord! For my part, I declare nothing
"could more ſoften my grief, than to be
"without any companion in ſo great a mis-
"fortune*."

Mr. Savage had now no hopes of life, but from the mercy of the crown, which was very earneſtly ſolicited by his friends, and which, with whatever difficulty the ſtory may obtain belief, was obſtructed only by his mother.

To prejudice the Queen againſt him, ſhe made uſe of an incident, which was omitted in the order of time, that it might be mentioned together with the purpoſe which it was made to ſerve. Mr. Savage, when he had diſcovered his birth, had an inceſſant deſire to ſpeak to his mother, who always avoided

* Mr. Savage's Life.

him

him in publick, and refuſed him admiſſion into her houſe. One evening walking, as it was his cuſtom, in the ſtreet that ſhe inhabited, he ſaw the door of her houſe by accident open; he entered it, and, finding no perſon in the paſſage to hinder him, went up ſtairs to ſalute her. She diſcovered him before he could enter her chamber, alarmed the family with the moſt diſtreſsful outcries, and when ſhe had by her ſcreams gathered them about her, ordered them to drive out of the houſe that villain, who had forced himſelf in upon her, and endeavoured to murder her. Savage, who had attempted with the moſt ſubmiſſive tenderneſs to ſoften her rage, hearing her utter ſo deteſtable an accuſation, thought it prudent to retire; and, I believe, never attempted afterwards to ſpeak to her.

But, ſhocked as he was with her falſhood and her cruelty, he imagined that ſhe intended no other uſe of her lye, than to ſet herſelf free from his embraces and ſolicitations, and was very far from ſuſpecting that ſhe would treaſure it in her memory, as an inſtrument of future wickedneſs, or that ſhe would endeavour

deavour for this fictitious aſſault to deprive him of his life.

But when the Queen was ſolicited for his pardon, and informed of the ſevere treatment which he had ſuffered from his judge, ſhe anſwered, that, however unjuſtifiable might be the manner of his trial, or whatever extenuation the action for which he was condemned might admit, ſhe could not think that man a proper object of the King's mercy, who had been capable of entering his mother's houſe in the night, with an intent to murder her.

By whom this atrocious calumny had been tranſmitted to the Queen; whether ſhe that invented had the front to relate it; whether ſhe found any one weak enough to credit it, or corrupt enough to concur with her in her hateful deſign, I know not: but methods had been taken to perſuade the Queen ſo ſtrongly of the truth of it, that ſhe for a long time refuſed to hear any of thoſe who petitioned for his life.

Thus had Savage periſhed by the evidence of a bawd, a ſtrumpet, and his mother, had

not juſtice and compaſſion procured him an advocate of rank too great to be rejected unheard, and of virtue too eminent to be heard without being believed. His merit and his calamities happened to reach the ear of the Counteſs of Hertford, who engaged in his ſupport with all the tenderneſs that is excited by pity, and all the zeal which is kindled by generoſity; and, demanding an audience of the Queen, laid before her the whole ſeries of his mother's cruelty, expoſed the improbability of an accuſation by which he was charged with an intent to commit a murder that could produce no advantage, and ſoon convinced her how little his former conduct could deſerve to be mentioned as a reaſon for extraordinary ſeverity.

The interpoſition of this Lady was ſo ſucceſsful, that he was ſoon after admitted to bail, and, on the 9th of March 1728, pleaded the King's pardon.

It is natural to enquire upon what motives his mother could proſecute him in a manner ſo outrageous and implacable; for what reaſon ſhe could employ all the arts of ma-

lice, and all the ſnares of calumny, to take away the life of her own ſon, of a ſon who never injured her, who was never ſupported by her expence, nor obſtructed any proſpect of pleaſure or advantage; why ſhe ſhould endeavour to deſtroy him by a lye—a lye which could not gain credit, but muſt vaniſh of itſelf at the firſt moment of examination, and of which only this can be ſaid to make it probable, that it may be obſerved from her conduct, that the moſt execrable crimes are ſometimes committed without apparent temptation.

This mother is ſtill alive, and may perhaps even yet, though her malice was ſo often defeated, enjoy the pleaſure of reflecting, that the life, which ſhe often endeavoured to deſtroy, was at leaſt ſhortened by her maternal offices; that though ſhe could not tranſport her ſon to the plantations, bury him in the ſhop of a mechanic, or haſten the hand of the public executioner, ſhe has yet had the ſatisfaction of imbittering all his hours, and forcing him into exigencies that hurried on his death.

It is by no means neceſſary to aggravate the enormity of this woman's conduct, by placing it in oppoſition to that of the Counteſs of Hertford; no one can fail to obſerve how much more amiable it is to relieve, than to oppreſs, and to reſcue innocence from deſtruction, than to deſtroy without an injury.

Mr. Savage, during his impriſonment, his trial, and the time in which he lay under ſentence of death, behaved with great firmneſs and equality of mind, and confirmed by his fortitude the eſteem of thoſe who before admired him for his abilities. The peculiar circumſtances of his life were made more generally known by a ſhort account*, which was then publiſhed, and of which ſeveral thouſands were in a few weeks diſperſed over the nation: and the compaſſion of mankind operated ſo powerfully in his favour, that he was enabled, by frequent preſents, not only to ſupport himſelf, but to aſſiſt Mr. Gregory in priſon; and, when he was pardoned and releaſed, he found the number of his friends not leſſened.

* Written by Mr. Beckingham and another gentleman.

The

The nature of the act for which he had been tried was in itſelf doubtful; of the evidences which appeared againſt him, the character of the man was not unexceptionable, that of the woman notoriouſly infamous: ſhe, whoſe teſtimony chiefly influenced the jury to condemn him, afterwards retracted her aſſertions. He always himſelf denied that he was drunk, as had been generally reported. Mr. Gregory, who is now Collector of Antigua, is ſaid to declare him far leſs criminal than he was imagined, even by ſome who favoured him: and Page himſelf afterwards confeſſed, that he had treated him with uncommon rigour. When all theſe particulars are rated together, perhaps the memory of Savage may not be much ſullied by his trial.

Some time after he had obtained his liberty, he met in the ſtreet the woman that had ſworn with ſo much malignity againſt him. She informed him, that ſhe was in diſtreſs, and, with a degree of confidence not eaſily attainable, deſired him to relieve her. He, inſtead of inſulting her miſery, and taking pleaſure in the calamities of one who had brought his life into danger, reprov-

ed her gently for her perjury; and changing the only guinea that he had, divided it equally between her and himſelf.

This is an action which in ſome ages would have made a ſaint, and perhaps in others a hero, and which, without any hyperbolical encomiums, muſt be allowed to be an inſtance of uncommon generoſity, an act of complicated virtue; by which he at once relieved the poor, corrected the vicious, and forgave an enemy; by which he at once remitted the ſtrongeſt provocations, and exerciſed the moſt ardent charity.

Compaſſion was indeed the diſtinguiſhing quality of Savage; he never appeared inclined to take advantage of weakneſs, to attack the defenceleſs, or to preſs upon the falling: whoever was diſtreſſed was certain at leaſt of his good wiſhes; and when he could give no aſſiſtance to extricate them from misfortunes, he endeavoured to ſooth them by ſympathy and tenderneſs.

But when his heart was not ſoftened by the ſight of miſery, he was ſometimes obſtinate in his reſentment, and did not quickly

loſe

loſe the remembrance of an injury. He always continued to ſpeak with anger of the inſolence and partiality of Page, and a ſhort time before his death revenged it by a ſatire*.

It is natural to enquire in what terms Mr. Savage ſpoke of this fatal action, when the danger was over, and he was under no neceſſity of uſing any art to ſet his conduct in the faireſt light. He was not willing to dwell upon it; and, if he tranſiently mentioned it, appeared neither to conſider himſelf as a murderer, nor as a man wholly free from the guilt of blood†. How much and how long he regretted it, appeared in a poem which he publiſhed many years afterwards. On occaſion of a copy of verſes, in which the failings of good men were recounted, and in which the author had endeavoured to illuſtrate his poſition, that "the "beſt may ſometimes deviate from virtue," by an inſtance of murder committed by Savage in the heat of wine, Savage remarked, that it was no very juſt repreſentation of a good man, to ſuppoſe him liable to drunkenneſs, and diſpoſed in his riots to cut throats.

* Printed in the late collection.

† In one of his letters he ſtyles it "a fatal quarrel, but too-well known."

He was now indeed at liberty, but was, as before, without any other ſupport than accidental favours and uncertain patronage afforded him; ſources by which he was ſometimes very liberally ſupplied, and which at other times were ſuddenly ſtopped; ſo that he ſpent his life between want and plenty; or, what was yet worſe, between beggary and extravagance; for as whatever he received was the gift of chance, which might as well favour him at one time as another, he was tempted to ſquander what he had, becauſe he always hoped to be immediately ſupplied.

Another cauſe of his profuſion was the abſurd kindneſs of his friends, who at once rewarded and enjoyed his abilities, by treating him at taverns, and habituating him to pleaſures which he could not afford to enjoy, and which he was not able to deny himſelf, though he purchaſed the luxury of a ſingle night by the anguiſh of cold and hunger for a week.

The experience of theſe inconveniences determined him to endeavour after ſome ſet-

tled income, which, having long found ſubmiſſion and intreaties fruitleſs, he attempted to extort from his mother by rougher methods. He had now, as he acknowledged, loſt that tenderneſs for her, which the whole ſeries of her cruelty had not been able wholly to repreſs, till he found, by the efforts which ſhe made for his deſtruction, that ſhe was not content with refuſing to aſſiſt him, and being neutral in his ſtruggles with poverty, but was as ready to ſnatch every opportunity of adding to his misfortunes, and that ſhe was to be conſidered as an enemy implacably malicious, whom nothing but his blood could ſatisfy. He therefore threatened to haraſs her with lampoons, and to publiſh a copious narrative of her conduct, unleſs ſhe conſented to purchaſe an exemption from infamy, by allowing him a penſion.

This expedient proved ſucceſsful. Whether ſhame ſtill ſurvived, though virtue was extinct, or whether her relations had more delicacy than herſelf, and imagined that ſome of the darts which ſatire might point at her would glance upon them; Lord Tyrconnel, whatever were his motives, upon his promiſe

to

to lay aſide his deſign of expoſing the cruelty of his mother, received him into his family, treated him as his equal, and engaged to allow him a penſion of two hundred pounds a year.

This was the golden part of Mr. Savage's life; and for ſome time he had no reaſon to complain of fortune; his appearance was ſplendid, his expences large, and his acquaintance extenſive. He was courted by all who endeavoured to be thought men of genius, and careſſed by all who valued themſelves upon a refined taſte. To admire Mr. Savage, was a proof of diſcernment; and to be acquainted with him, was a title to poetical reputation. His preſence was ſufficient to make any place of public entertainment popular; and his approbation and example conſtituted the faſhion. So powerful is genius, when it is inveſted with the glitter of affluence! Men willingly pay to fortune that regard which they owe to merit, and are pleaſed when they have an opportunity at once of gratifying their vanity, and practiſing their duty.

This

This interval of proſperity furniſhed him with opportunities of enlarging his knowledge of human nature, by contemplating life from its higheſt gradations to its loweſt; and, had he afterwards applied to dramatic poetry, he would perhaps not have had many ſuperiors; for as he never ſuffered any ſcene to paſs before his eyes without notice, he had treaſured in his mind all the different combinations of paſſions, and the innumerable mixtures of vice and virtue, which diſtinguiſh one character from another; and, as his conception was ſtrong, his expreſſions were clear; he eaſily received impreſſions from objects, and very forcibly tranſmitted them to others.

Of his exact obſervations on human life he has left a proof, which would do honour to the greateſt names, in a ſmall pamphlet, called, *The Author to be let**, where he introduces Iſcariot Hackney, a proſtitute ſcribbler, giving an account of his birth, his education, his diſpoſition and morals, habits of life, and maxims of conduct. In the introduction are related many ſecret hiſtories of

* Printed in his Works, vol. II. p. 231.

the

the petty writers of that time, but ſometimes mixed with ungenerous reflections on their birth, their circumſtances, or thoſe of their relations; nor can it be denied, that ſome paſſages are ſuch as Iſcariot Hackney might himſelf have produced.

He was accuſed likewiſe of living in an appearance of friendſhip with ſome whom he ſatiriſed, and of making uſe of the confidence which he gained by a ſeeming kindneſs to diſcover failings and expoſe them: it muſt be confeſſed, that Mr. Savage's eſteem was no very certain poſſeſſion, and that he would lampoon at one time thoſe whom he had praiſed at another.

It may be alleged, that the ſame man may change his principles, and that, he who was once deſervedly commended, may be afterwards ſatiriſed with equal juſtice, or that the poet was dazzled with the appearance of virtue, and found the man whom he had celebrated, when he had an opportunity of examining him more narrowly, unworthy of the panegyric which he had too haſtily beſtowed; and that, as a falſe ſatire ought to be recanted,

recanted, for the ſake of him whoſe reputation may be injured, falſe praiſe ought likewiſe to be obviated, leſt the diſtinction between vice and virtue ſhould be loſt, leſt a bad man ſhould be truſted upon the credit of his encomiaſt, or leſt others ſhould endeavour to obtain the like praiſes by the ſame means.

But though theſe excuſes may be often plauſible, and ſometimes juſt, they are very ſeldom ſatisfactory to mankind; and the writer, who is not conſtant to his ſubject, quickly ſinks into contempt, his ſatire loſes its force, and his panegyric its value, and he is only conſidered at one time as a flatterer, and as a calumniator at another.

To avoid theſe imputations, it is only neceſſary to follow the rules of virtue, and to preſerve an unvaried regard to truth. For though it is undoubtedly poſſible, that a man, however cautious, may be ſometimes deceived by an artful appearance of virtue, or by falſe evidences of guilt, ſuch errors will not be frequent; and it will be allowed, that the name of an author would never have been made contemptible, had no man ever ſaid what

what he did not think, or miſled others but when he was himſelf deceived.

If *The Author to be let* was firſt publiſhed in a ſingle pamphlet, and afterwards inſerted in a collection of pieces relating to the Dunciad, which were addreſſed by Mr. Savage to the Earl of Middleſex, in a *dedication which he was prevailed upon to ſign, though he did not write it, and in which there are ſome poſitions, that the true author would perhaps not have publiſhed under his own name, and on which Mr. Savage afterwards reflected with no great ſatisfaction; the enumeration of the bad effects of the uncontroled freedom of the preſs, and the aſſertion that the "liberties taken by the "writers of Journals with their ſuperiors "were exorbitant and unjuſtifiable," very ill became men, who have themſelves not always ſhewn the exacteſt regard to the laws of ſubordination in their writings, and who have often ſatiriſed thoſe that at leaſt thought themſelves their ſuperiors, as they were eminent for their hereditary rank, and employed

* See his Works, vol. II. p. 233.

in

in the higheſt offices of the kingdom. But this is only an inſtance of that partiality which almoſt every man indulges with regard to himſelf; the liberty of the preſs is a bleſſing when we are inclined to write againſt others, and a calamity when we find ourſelves overborne by the multitude of our aſſailants; as the power of the crown is always thought too great by thoſe who ſuffer by its influence, and too little by thoſe in whoſe favour it is exerted; and a ſtanding army is generally accounted neceſſary by thoſe who command, and dangerous and oppreſſive by thoſe who ſupport it.

Mr. Savage was likewiſe very far from believing, that the letters annexed to each ſpecies of bad poets in the Bathos, were, as he was directed to aſſert, "ſet down at ran-"dom;" for when he was charged by one of his friends with putting his name to ſuch an improbability, he had no other anſwer to make, than that "he did not think of it;" and his friend had too much tenderneſs to reply, that next to the crime of writing contrary to what he thought, was that of writing without thinking.

After

After having remarked what is falſe in this dedication, it is proper that I obſerve the impartiality which I recommend, by declaring what Savage aſſerted, that the account of the circumſtances which attended the publication of the Dunciad, however ſtrange and improbable, was exactly true.

The publication of this piece at this time raiſed Mr. Savage a great number of enemies among thoſe that were attacked by Mr. Pope, with whom he was conſidered as a kind of confederate, and whom he was ſuſpected of ſupplying with private intelligence and ſecret incidents: ſo that the ignominy of an informer was added to the terror of a ſatiriſt.

That he was not altogether free from literary hypocriſy, and that he ſometimes ſpoke one thing, and wrote another, cannot be denied; becauſe he himſelf confeſſed, that, when he lived in great familiarity with Dennis, he wrote an epigram* againſt him.

Mr.

* This epigram was, I believe, never publiſhed.

Should Dennis publiſh you had ſtabb'd your brother,
Lampoon'd your monarch, or debauch'd your mother;
Say,

Mr. Savage however ſet all the malice of all the pigmy writers at defiance, and thought the friendſhip of Mr. Pope cheaply purchaſed by being expoſed to their cenſure and their hatred; nor had he any reaſon to repent of the preference, for he found Mr. Pope a ſteady and unalienable friend almoſt to the end of his life.

About this time, notwithſtanding his avowed neutrality with regard to party, he publiſhed a panegyric on Sir Robert Walpole, for which he was rewarded by him with twenty guineas, a ſum not very large, if either the excellence of the performance, or the affluence of the patron, be conſidered; but greater than he afterwards obtained from a perſon of yet higher rank, and more deſirous in appearance of being diſtinguiſhed as a patron of literature.

Say, what revenge on Dennis can be had,
Too dull for laughter, for reply too mad?
On one ſo poor you cannot take the law,
On one ſo old your ſword you ſcorn to draw.
Uncag'd then, let the harmleſs monſter rage,
Secure in dulneſs, madneſs, want, and age.

As he was very far from approving the conduct of Sir Robert Walpole, and in converſation mentioned him ſometimes with acrimony, and generally with contempt; as he was one of thoſe who were always zealous in their aſſertions of the juſtice of the late oppoſition, jealous of the rights of the people, and alarmed by the long-continued triumph of the court; it was natural to aſk him what could induce him to employ his poetry in praiſe of that man who was, in his opinion, an enemy to liberty, and an oppreſſor of his country? He alleged, that he was then dependent upon the Lord Tyrconnel, who was an implicit follower of the miniſtry; and that being enjoined by him, not without menaces, to write in praiſe of his leader, he had not reſolution ſufficient to ſacrifice the pleaſure of affluence to that of integrity.

On this, and on many other occaſions, he was ready to lament the miſery of living at the tables of other men, which was his fate from the beginning to the end of his life; for I know not whether he ever had, for three months together, a ſettled habitation, in

in which he could claim a right of reſidence.

To this unhappy ſtate it is juſt to impute much of the inconſtancy of his conduct; for though a readineſs to comply with the inclination of others was no part of his natural character, yet he was ſometimes obliged to relax his obſtinacy, and ſubmit his own judgement, and even his virtue, to the government of thoſe by whom he was ſupported: ſo that, if his miſeries were ſometimes the conſequences of his faults, he ought not yet to be wholly excluded from compaſſion, becauſe his faults were very often the effects of his misfortunes.

In this gay period* of his life, while he was ſurrounded by affluence and pleaſure, he publiſhed *The Wanderer*, a moral poem, of which the deſign is compriſed in theſe lines:

I fly all public care, all venal ſtrife,
To try the ſtill compar'd with active life;
To prove, by theſe the ſons of men may owe
The fruits of bliſs to burſting clouds of woe;

* 1729.

That ev'n calamity, by thought refin'd,
Inſpirits and adorns the thinking mind.

And more diſtinctly in the following paſſage:

By woe, the ſoul to daring action ſwells;
By woe, in plaintleſs patience it excels;
From patience, prudent clear experience ſprings,
And traces knowledge thro' the courſe of things!
Thence hope is form'd, thence fortitude, ſucceſs,
Renown:—whate'er men covet and careſs.

This performance was always conſidered by himſelf as his maſter-piece; and Mr. Pope, when he aſked his opinion of it, told him, that he read it once over, and was not diſpleaſed with it, that it gave him more pleaſure at the ſecond peruſal, and delighted him ſtill more at the third.

It has been generally objected to *The Wanderer*, that the diſpoſition of the parts is irregular; that the deſign is obſcure, and the plan perplexed; that the images, however beautiful, ſucceed each other without order; and that the whole performance is not ſo much a regular fabric, as a heap of ſhining materials

materials thrown together by accident, which ſtrikes rather with the ſolemn magnificence of a ſtupendous ruin, than the elegant grandeur of a finiſhed pile.

This criticiſm is univerſal, and therefore it is reaſonable to believe it at leaſt in a great degree juſt; but Mr. Savage was always of a contrary opinion, and thought his drift could only be miſſed by negligence or ſtupidity, and that the whole plan was regular, and the parts diſtinct.

It was never denied to abound with ſtrong repreſentations of nature, and juſt obſervations upon life; and it may eaſily be obſerved, that moſt of his pictures have an evident tendency to illuſtrate his firſt great poſition, "that good is the conſequence of evil." The ſun that burns up the mountains, fructifies the vales; the deluge that ruſhes down the broken rocks with dreadful impetuoſity, is ſeparated into purling brooks; and the rage of the hurricane purifies the air.

Even in this poem he has not been able to forbear one touch upon the cruelty of his mo-

ther, which, though remarkably delicate and tender, is a proof how deep an impreſſion it had upon his mind.

This muſt be at leaſt acknowledged, which ought to be thought equivalent to many other excellencies, that this poem can promote no other purpoſes than thoſe of virtue, and that it is written with a very ſtrong ſenſe of the efficacy of religion.

But my province is rather to give the hiſtory of Mr. Savage's performances, than to diſplay their beauties, or to obviate the criticiſms which they have occaſioned; and therefore I ſhall not dwell upon the particular paſſages which deſerve applauſe: I ſhall neither ſhew the excellence of his deſcriptions, nor expatiate on the terrific portrait of ſuicide, nor point out the artful touches, by which he has diſtinguiſhed the intellectual features of the rebels, who ſuffered death in his laſt canto. It is, however, proper to obſerve, that Mr. Savage always declared the characters wholly fictitious, and without the leaſt alluſion to any real perſons or actions.

From

From a poem ſo diligently laboured, and ſo ſucceſsfully finiſhed, it might be reaſonably expected that he ſhould have gained conſiderable advantage; nor can it, without ſome degree of indignation and concern, be told, that he ſold the copy for ten guineas, of which he afterwards returned two, that the two laſt ſheets of the work might be reprinted, of which he had in his abſence intruſted the correction to a friend, who was too indolent to perform it with accuracy.

A ſuperſtitious regard to the correction of his ſheets was one of Mr. Savage's peculiarities: he often altered, reviſed, recurred to his firſt reading or punctuation, and again adopted the alteration; he was dubious and irreſolute without end, as on a queſtion of the laſt importance, and at laſt was ſeldom ſatisfied: the intruſion or omiſſion of a comma was ſufficient to diſcompoſe him, and he would lament an error of a ſingle letter as a heavy calamity. In one of his letters relating to an impreſſion of ſome verſes, he remarks, that he had, with regard to the correction of the proof, "a ſpell upon him;" and indeed the anxiety with which he dwelt

upon the minuteſt and moſt trifling niceties, deſerved no other name than that of faſcination.

That he ſold ſo valuable a performance for ſo ſmall a price, was not to be imputed either to neceſſity, by which the learned and ingenious are often obliged to ſubmit to very hard conditions; or to avarice, by which the booksellers are frequently incited to oppreſs that genius by which they are ſupported; but to that intemperate deſire of pleaſure, and habitual ſlavery to his paſſions, which involved him in many perplexities. He happened at that time to be engaged in the purſuit of ſome trifling gratification, and, being without money for the preſent occaſion, ſold his poem to the firſt bidder, and perhaps for the firſt price that was propoſed, and would probably have been content with leſs, if leſs had been offered him.

This poem was addreſſed to the Lord Tyrconnel, not only in the firſt lines, but in a formal dedication filled with the higheſt ſtrains of panegyric, and the warmeſt profeſſions of gratitude, but by no means remarkable for delicacy of connection or elegance of ſtyle.

Theſe praiſes in a ſhort time he found himſelf inclined to retract, being diſcarded by the man on whom he had beſtowed them, and whom he then immediately diſcovered not to have deſerved them. Of this quarrel, which every day made more bitter, Lord Tyrconnel and Mr. Savage aſſigned very different reaſons, which might perhaps all in reality concur, though they were not all convenient to be alleged by either party. Lord Tyrconnel affirmed, that it was the conſtant practice of Mr. Savage to enter a tavern with any company that propoſed it, drink the moſt expenſive wines with great profuſion, and when the reckoning was demanded, to be without money: If, as it often happened, his company were willing to defray his part, the affair ended, without any ill conſequences; but, if they were refractory, and expected that the wine ſhould be paid for by him that drank it, his method of compoſition was, to take them with him to his own apartment, aſſume the government of the houſe, and order the butler in an imperious manner to ſet the beſt wine in the cellar before his company, who often drank till they forgot the reſpect due to the houſe

in

in which they were entertained, indulged themſelves in the utmoſt extravagance of merriment, practiſed the moſt licentious frolicks, and committed all the outrages of drunkenneſs.

Nor was this the only charge which Lord Tyrconnel brought againſt him: Having given him a collection of valuable books, ſtamped with his own arms, he had the mortification to ſee them in a ſhort time expoſed to ſale upon the ſtalls, it being uſual with Mr. Savage, when he wanted a ſmall ſum, to take his books to the pawnbroker.

Whoever was acquainted with Mr. Savage eaſily credited both theſe accuſations: for, having been obliged from his firſt entrance into the world to ſubſiſt upon expedients, affluence was not able to exalt him above them; and ſo much was he delighted with wine and converſation, and ſo long had he been accuſtomed to live by chance, that he would at any time go to the tavern without ſcruple, and truſt for the reckoning to the liberality of his company, and frequently of company to whom he was very little known. This conduct indeed very ſeldom drew upon him

him those inconveniences that might be feared by any other perſon; for his converſation was ſo entertaining, and his addreſs ſo pleaſing, that few thought the pleaſure which they received from him dearly purchaſed, by paying for his wine. It was his peculiar happineſs, that he ſcarcely ever found a ſtranger, whom he did not leave a friend; but it muſt likewiſe be added, that he had not often a friend long, without obliging him to become a ſtranger.

Mr. Savage, on the other hand, declared, that Lord Tyrconnel* quarrelled with him, becauſe he would ſubſtract from his own luxury and extravagance what he had promiſed to allow him, and that his reſentment was only a plea for the violation of his promiſe: He aſſerted, that he had done nothing that ought to exclude him from that ſubſiſtence which he thought not ſo much a favour, as a debt, ſince it was offered him upon conditions, which he had never broken; and that his only fault was, that he could not be ſupported with nothing.

* His expreſſion in one of his letters was, "that Lord "Tyrconnel had involved his eſtate, and therefore poorly "ſought an occaſion to quarrel with him."

He

He acknowledged, that Lord Tyrconnel often exhorted him to regulate his method of life, and not to ſpend all his nights in taverns, and that he appeared very deſirous, that he would paſs thoſe hours with him, which he ſo freely beſtowed upon others. This demand Mr. Savage conſidered as a cenſure of his conduct, which he could never patiently bear; and which, in the latter and cooler part of his life, was ſo offenſive to him, that he declared it as his reſolution, "to ſpurn "that friend who ſhould preſume to dictate "to him;" and it is not likely, that in his earlier years he received admonitions with more calmneſs.

He was likewiſe inclined to reſent ſuch expectations, as tending to infringe his liberty, of which he was very jealous, when it was neceſſary to the gratification of his paſſions; and declared, that the requeſt was ſtill more unreaſonable, as the company to which he was to have been confined was inſupportably diſagreeable. This aſſertion affords another inſtance of that inconſiſtency of his writings with his converſation, which was ſo often to be obſerved. He forgot how laviſhly

laviſhly he had, in his Dedication to *The Wanderer*, extolled the delicacy and penetration, the humanity and generoſity, the candour and politeneſs, of the man, whom, when he no longer loved him, he declared to be a wretch without underſtanding, without good-nature, and without juſtice; of whoſe name he thought himſelf obliged to leave no trace in any future edition of his writings; and accordingly blotted it out of that copy of *The Wanderer* which was in his hands.

During his continuance with the Lord Tyrconnel, he wrote *The Triumph of Health and Mirth*, on the recovery of Lady Tyrconnel from a languiſhing illneſs. This performance is remarkable, not only for the gaiety of the ideas, and the melody of the numbers, but for the agreeable fiction upon which it is formed. Mirth, overwhelmed with ſorrow for the ſickneſs of her favourite, takes a flight in queſt of her ſiſter Health, whom ſhe finds reclined upon the brow of a lofty mountain, amidſt the fragrance of perpetual ſpring, with the breezes of the morning ſporting about her. Being ſolicited by her

her ſiſter Mirth, ſhe readily promiſes her aſſiſtance, flies away in a cloud, and impregnates the waters of Bath with new virtue; by which the ſickneſs of Belinda is relieved.

As the reputation of his abilities, the particular circumſtances of his birth and life, the ſplendour of his appearance, and the diſtinction which was for ſome time paid him by Lord Tyrconnel, intitled him to familiarity with perſons of higher rank than thoſe to whoſe converſation he had been before admitted, he did not fail to gratify that curioſity, which induced him to take a nearer view of thoſe whom their birth, their employments, or their fortunes, neceſſarily place at a diſtance from the greateſt part of mankind, and to examine whether their merit was magnified or diminiſhed by the medium through which it was contemplated; whether the ſplendour with which they dazzled their admirers was inherent in themſelves, or only reflected on them by the objects that ſurrounded them; and whether great men were ſelected for high ſtations, or high ſtations made great men.

For this purpoſe he took all opportunities of converſing familiarly with thoſe who were moſt conſpicuous at that time for their power or their influence; he watched their looſer moments, and examined their domeſtic behaviour, with that acuteneſs which nature had given him, and which the uncommon variety of his life had contributed to increaſe, and that inquiſitiveneſs which muſt always be produced in a vigorous mind, by an abſolute freedom from all preſſing or domeſtic engagements. His diſcernment was quick, and therefore he ſoon found in every perſon, and in every affair, ſomething that deſerved attention; he was ſupported by others, without any care for himſelf, and was therefore at leiſure to purſue his obſervations.

More circumſtances to conſtitute a critic on human life could not eaſily concur; nor indeed could any man, who aſſumed from accidental advantages more praiſe than he could juſtly claim from his real merit, admit an acquaintance more dangerous than that of Savage; of whom likewiſe it muſt be confeſſed, that abilities really exalted above the

the common level, or virtue refined from paſſion, or proof againſt corruption, could not eaſily find an abler judge, or a warmer advocate.

What was the reſult of Mr. Savage's enquiry, though he was not much accuſtomed to conceal his diſcoveries, it may not be entirely ſafe to relate, becauſe the perſons whoſe characters he criticiſed are powerful; and power and reſentment are ſeldom ſtrangers; nor would it perhaps be wholly juſt, becauſe what he aſſerted in converſation might, though true in general, be heightened by ſome momentary ardour of imagination, and, as it can be delivered only from memory, may be imperfectly repreſented; ſo that the picture at firſt aggravated, and then unſkilfully copied, may be juſtly ſuſpected to retain no great reſemblance of the original.

It may however be obſerved, that he did not appear to have formed very elevated ideas of thoſe to whom the adminiſtration of affairs, or the conduct of parties, has been intruſted; who have been conſidered as the advocates of the crown, or the guardians of the

the people; and who have obtained the moſt implicit confidence, and the loudeſt applauſes. Of one particular perſon, who has been at one time ſo popular as to be generally eſteemed, and at another ſo formidable as to be univerſally deteſted, he obſerved, that his acquiſitions had been ſmall, or that his capacity was narrow, and that the whole range of his mind was from obſcenity to politics, and from politics to obſcenity.

But the opportunity of indulging his ſpeculations on great characters was now at an end. He was baniſhed from the table of Lord Tyrconnel, and turned again adrift upon the world, without proſpect of finding quickly any other harbour. As prudence was not one of the virtues by which he was diſtinguiſhed, he had made no proviſion againſt a misfortune like this. And though it is not to be imagined but that the ſeparation muſt for ſome time have been preceded by coldneſs, peeviſhneſs, or neglect, though it was undoubtedly the conſequence of accumulated provocations on both ſides; yet every one that knew Savage will readily believe, that to him it was ſudden as a ſtroke of thunder;

that, though he might have tranſiently ſuſpected it, he had never ſuffered any thought ſo unpleaſing to ſink into his mind, but that he had driven it away by amuſements, or dreams of future felicity and affluence, and had never taken any meaſures by which he might prevent a precipitation from plenty to indigence.

This quarrel and ſeparation, and the difficulties to which Mr. Savage was expoſed by them, were ſoon known both to his friends and enemies; nor was it long before he perceived, from the behaviour of both, how much is added to the luſtre of genius by the ornaments of wealth.

His condition did not appear to excite much compaſſion; for he had not always been careful to uſe the advantages he enjoyed with that moderation which ought to have been with more than uſual caution preſerved by him, who knew, if he had reflected, that he was only a dependant on the bounty of another, whom he could expect to ſupport him no longer than he endeavoured to preſerve his favour by complying with his inclinations,

linations, and whom he nevertheleſs ſet at defiance, and was continually irritating by negligence or encroachments.

Examples need not be ſought at any great diſtance to prove, that ſuperiority of fortune has a natural tendency to kindle pride, and that pride ſeldom fails to exert itſelf in contempt and inſult; and if this is often the effect of hereditary wealth, and of honours enjoyed only by the merit of others, it is ſome extenuation of any indecent triumphs to which this unhappy man may have been betrayed, that his proſperity was heightened by the force of novelty, and made more intoxicating by a ſenſe of the miſery in which he had ſo long languiſhed, and perhaps of the inſults which he had formerly borne, and which he might now think himſelf entitled to revenge. It is too common for thoſe who have unjuſtly ſuffered pain, to inflict it likewiſe in their turn with the ſame injuſtice, and to imagine that they have a right to treat others as they have themſelves been treated.

That Mr. Savage was too much elevated by any good fortune, is generally known; and

ſome paſſages of his Introduction to *The Author to be let* ſufficiently ſhew, that he did not wholly refrain from ſuch ſatire as he afterwards thought very unjuſt, when he was expoſed to it himſelf; for when he was afterwards ridiculed in the character of a diſtreſſed poet, he very eaſily diſcovered, that diſtreſs was not a proper ſubject for merriment, or topic of invective. He was then able to diſcern, that, if miſery be the effect of virtue, it ought to be reverenced; if of ill-fortune, to be pitied; and if of vice, not to be inſulted, becauſe it is perhaps itſelf a puniſhment adequate to the crime by which it was produced. And the humanity of that man can deſerve no panegyric, who is capable of reproaching a criminal in the hands of the executioner.

But theſe reflections, though they readily occurred to him in the firſt and laſt parts of his life, were, I am afraid, for a long time forgotten; at leaſt they were, like many other maxims, treaſured up in his mind, rather for ſhew than uſe, and operated very little upon his conduct, however elegantly he might ſometimes explain, or however forcibly he might inculcate them.

His

His degradation therefore from the condition which he had enjoyed with ſuch wanton thoughtleſſneſs, was conſidered by many as an occaſion of triumph. Thoſe who had before paid their court to him without ſucceſs, ſoon returned the contempt which they had ſuffered; and they who had received favours from him, for of ſuch favours as he could beſtow he was very liberal, did not always remember them. So much more certain are the effects of reſentment than of gratitude: it is not only to many more pleaſing to recollect thoſe faults which place others below them, than thoſe virtues by which they are themſelves compaſatively depreſſed; but it is likewiſe more eaſy to neglect, than to recompenſe; and though there are few who will practiſe a laborious virtue, there will never be wanting multitudes that will indulge an eaſy vice.

Savage however was very little diſturbed at the marks of contempt which his ill-fortune brought upon him, from thoſe whom he never eſteemed, and with whom he never conſidered himſelf as levelled by any calamities: and though it was not without ſome

uneaſineſs that he ſaw ſome, whoſe friendſhip he valued, change their behaviour; he yet obſerved their coldneſs without much emotion, conſidered them as the ſlaves of fortune and the worſhipers of proſperity, and was more inclined to deſpiſe them, than to lament himſelf.

It does not appear, that, after this return of his wants, he found mankind equally favourable to him, as at his firſt appearance in the world. His ſtory, though in reality not leſs melancholy, was leſs affecting, becauſe it was no longer new; it therefore procured him no new friends; and thoſe that had formerly relieved him, thought they might now conſign him to others. He was now likewiſe conſidered by many rather as criminal, than as unhappy; for the friends of Lord Tyrconnel, and of his mother, were ſufficiently induſtrious to publiſh his weakneſſes, which were, indeed very numerous; and nothing was forgotten, that might make him either hateful or ridiculous.

It cannot but be imagined, that ſuch repreſentations of his faults muſt make great numbers

bers leſs ſenſible of his diſtreſs; many, who had only an opportunity to hear one part, made no ſcruple to propagate the account which they received; many aſſiſted their circulation from malice or revenge; and perhaps many pretended to credit them, that they might with a better grace withdraw their regard, or withhold their aſſiſtance.

Savage however was not one of thoſe, who ſuffered himſelf to be injured without reſiſtance, nor was leſs diligent in expoſing the faults of Lord Tyrconnel, over whom he obtained at leaſt this advantage, that he drove him firſt to the practice of outrage and violence; for he was ſo much provoked by the wit and virulence of Savage, that he came with a number of attendants, that did no honour to his courage, to beat him at a coffee-houſe. But it happened that he had left the place a few minutes, and his lordſhip had, without danger, the pleaſure of boaſting how he would have treated him. Mr. Savage went next day to repay his viſit at his own houſe; but was prevailed on, by his domeſtics, to retire without inſiſting upon ſeeing him.

Lord Tyrconnel was accuſed by Mr. Savage of ſome actions, which ſcarcely any provocations will be thought ſufficient to juſtify; ſuch as ſeizing what he had in his lodgings, and other inſtances of wanton cruelty, by which he increaſed the diſtreſs of Savage, without any advantage to himſelf.

Theſe mutual accuſations were retorted on both ſides, for many years, with the utmoſt degree of virulence and rage; and time ſeemed rather to augment than diminiſh their reſentment. That the anger of Mr. Savage ſhould be kept alive, is not ſtrange, becauſe he felt every day the conſequences of the quarrel; but it might reaſonably have been hoped, that Lord Tyrconnel might have relented, and at length have forgot thoſe provocations, which, however they might have once inflamed him, had not in reality much hurt him.

The ſpirit of Mr. Savage indeed never ſuffered him to ſolicit a reconciliation; he returned reproach for reproach, and inſult for inſult; his ſuperiority of wit ſupplied the diſadvantages of his fortune, and enabled him to

form a party, and prejudice great numbers in his favour.

But though this might be ſome gratification of his vanity, it afforded very little relief to his neceſſities; and he was very frequently reduced to uncommon hardſhips, of which, however, he never made any mean or importunate complaints, being formed rather to bear miſery with fortitude, than enjoy proſperity with moderation.

He now thought himſelf again at liberty to expoſe the cruelty of his mother, and therefore, I believe, about this time, publiſhed *The Baſtard*, a poem remarkable for the vivacious ſallies of thought in the beginning, where he makes a pompous enumeration of the imaginary advantages of baſe birth; and the pathetic ſentiments at the end, where he recounts the real calamities which he ſuffered by the crime of his parents.

The vigour and ſpirit of the verſes, the peculiar circumſtances of the author, the novelty of the ſubject, and the notoriety of the ſtory to which the alluſions are made, procured

cured this performance a very favourable reception; great numbers were immediately diſperſed, and editions were multiplied with unuſual rapidity.

One circumſtance attended the publication, which Savage uſed to relate with great ſatisfaction. His mother, to whom the poem was with "due reverence" inſcribed, happened then to be at Bath, where ſhe could not conveniently retire from cenſure, or conceal herſelf from obſervation; and no ſooner did the reputation of the poem begin to ſpread, than ſhe heard it repeated in all places of concourſe, nor could ſhe enter the aſſembly-rooms, or croſs the walks, without being ſaluted with ſome lines from *The Baſtard*.

This was perhaps the firſt time that ever ſhe diſcovered a ſenſe of ſhame, and on this occaſion the power of wit was very conſpicuous; the wretch who had, without ſcruple, proclaimed herſelf an adultereſs, and who had firſt endeavoured to ſtarve her ſon, then to tranſport him, and afterwards to hang him, was not able to bear the repreſentation of her own conduct; but fled from reproach, though

ſhe

ſhe felt no pain from guilt, and left Bath with the utmoſt haſte, to ſhelter herſelf among the crowds of London.

Thus Savage had the ſatisfaction of finding, that, though he could not reform his mother, he could puniſh her, and that he did not always ſuffer alone.

The pleaſure which he received from this increaſe of his poetical reputation, was ſufficient for ſome time to overbalance the miſeries of want, which this performance did not much alleviate; for it was ſold for a very trivial ſum to a bookſeller, who, though the ſucceſs was ſo uncommon that five impreſſions were ſold, of which many were undoubtedly very numerous, had not generoſity ſufficient to admit the unhappy writer to any part of the profit.

The ſale of this poem was always mentioned by Savage with the utmoſt elevation of heart, and referred to by him as an inconteſtable proof of a general acknowledgement of his abilities. It was indeed the only production of which he could juſtly boaſt a general reception.

But

But though he did not loſe the opportunity which ſucceſs gave him, of ſetting a high rate on his abilities, but paid due deference to the ſuffrages of mankind when they were given in his favour, he did not ſuffer his eſteem of himſelf to depend upon others, nor found any thing ſacred in the voice of the people when they were inclined to cenſure him; he then readily ſhewed the folly of expecting that the publick ſhould judge right, obſerved how ſlowly poetical merit had often forced its way into the world; he contented himſelf with the applauſe of men of judgement, and was ſomewhat diſpoſed to exclude all thoſe from the character of men of judgement who did not applaud him.

But he was at other times more favourable to mankind than to think them blind to the beauties of his works, and imputed the ſlowneſs of their ſale to other cauſes; either they were publiſhed at a time when the town was empty, or when the attention of the publick was engroſſed by ſome ſtruggle in the parliament, or ſome other object of general concern; or they were by the neglect of the publiſher not diligently diſperſed, or by his avarice

avarice not advertiſed with ſufficient frequency. Addreſs, or induſtry, or liberality, was always wanting; and the blame was laid rather on any perſon than the author.

By arts like theſe, arts which every man practiſes in ſome degree, and to which too much of the little tranquillity of life is to be aſcribed, Savage was always able to live at peace with himſelf. Had he indeed only made uſe of theſe expedients to alleviate the loſs or want of fortune or reputation, or any other advantages, which it is not in man's power to beſtow upon himſelf, they might have been juſtly mentioned as inſtances of a philoſophical mind, and very properly propoſed to the imitation of multitudes, who, for want of diverting their imaginations with the ſame dexterity, languiſh under afflictions which might be eaſily removed.

It were doubtleſs to be wiſhed, that truth and reaſon were univerſally prevalent; that every thing were eſteemed according to its real value; and that men would ſecure themſelves from being diſappointed in their endeavours after happineſs, by placing it only in

in virtue, which is always to be obtained; but if adventitious and foreign pleaſures muſt be purſued, it would be perhaps of ſome benefit, ſince that purſuit muſt frequently be fruitleſs, if the practice of Savage could be taught, that folly might be an antidote to folly, and one fallacy be obviated by another.

But the danger of this pleaſing intoxication muſt not be concealed; nor indeed can any one, after having obſerved the life of Savage, need to be cautioned againſt it. By imputing none of his miſeries to himſelf, he continued to act upon the ſame principles, and to follow the ſame path; was never made wiſer by his ſufferings, nor preſerved by one misfortune from falling into another. He proceeded throughout his life to tread the ſame ſteps on the ſame circle; always applauding his paſt conduct, or at leaſt forgetting it, to amuſe himſelf with phantoms of happineſs, which were dancing before him; and willingly turned his eyes from the light of reaſon, when it would have diſcovered the illuſion, and ſhewn him, what he never wiſhed to ſee, his real ſtate.

He

He is even accuſed, after having lulled his imagination with thoſe ideal opiates, of having tried the ſame experiment upon his conſcience; and, having accuſtomed himſelf to impute all deviations from the right to foreign cauſes, it is certain that he was upon every occaſion too eaſily reconciled to himſelf, and that he appeared very little to regret thoſe practices which had impaired his reputation. The reigning error of his life was, that he miſtook the love for the practice of virtue, and was indeed not ſo much a good man, as the friend of goodneſs.

This at leaſt muſt be allowed him, that he always preſerved a ſtrong ſenſe of the dignity, the beauty, and the neceſſity of virtue, and that he never contributed deliberately to ſpread corruption amongſt mankind. His actions, which were generally precipitate, were often blameable; but his writings, being the productions of ſtudy, uniformly tended to the exaltation of the mind, and the propagation of morality and piety.

Theſe writings may improve mankind, when his failings ſhall be forgotten; and

therefore he muſt be conſidered, upon the whole, as a benefactor to the world; nor can his perſonal example do any hurt, ſince, whoever hears of his faults, will hear of the miſeries which they brought upon him, and which would deſerve leſs pity, had not his condition been ſuch as made his faults pardonable. He may be conſidered as a child expoſed to all the temptations of indigence, at an age when reſolution was not yet ſtrengthened by conviction, nor virtue confirmed by habit; a circumſtance which in his *Baſtard* he laments in a very affecting manner:

——No Mother's care
Shielded my infant innocence with prayer:
No Father's guardian-hand my youth maintain'd,
Call'd forth my virtues, or from vice reſtrain'd.

*The Baſtard*, however it might provoke or mortify his mother, could not be expected to melt her to compaſſion, ſo that he was ſtill under the ſame want of the neceſſities of life; and he therefore exerted all the intereſt which his wit, or his birth, or his misfortunes, could procure, to obtain, upon the death of Euſden, the place of Poet Laureat,

and

and proſecuted his application with ſo much diligence, that the King publickly declared it his intention to beſtow it upon him; but ſuch was the fate of Savage, that even the King, when he intended his advantage, was diſappointed in his ſchemes; for the Lord Chamberlain, who has the diſpoſal of the laurel, as one of the appendages of his office, either did not know the King's deſign, or did not approve it, or thought the nomination of the Laureat an encroachment upon his rights, and therefore beſtowed the laurel upon Colley Cibber.

Mr. Savage, thus diſappointed, took a reſolution of applying to the queen, that, having once given him life, ſhe would enable him to ſupport it, and therefore publiſhed a ſhort poem on her birth-day, to which he gave the odd title of *Volunteer Laureat*. The event of this eſſay he has himſelf related in the following letter, which he prefixed to the poem, when he afterwards reprinted it in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, from whence I have copied it intire*, as this was one of the few attempts in which Mr. Savage ſucceeded.

* The poem is inſerted in the late collection.

"Mr. URBAN,

"In your Magazine for February you "publiſhed the laſt *Volunteer Laureat*, writ-"ten on a very melancholy occaſion, the "death of the royal patroneſs of arts and "literature in general, and of the author of "that poem in particular; I now ſend you "the firſt that Mr. Savage wrote under that "title.—This gentleman, notwithſtanding a "very conſiderable intereſt, being, on the "death of Mr. Euſden, diſappointed of the "Laureat's place, wrote the before-mention-"ed poem; which was no ſooner publiſhed, "but the late Queen ſent to a bookſeller for "it: the author had not at that time a friend "either to get him introduced, or his poem "preſented at court; yet ſuch was the un-"ſpeakable goodneſs of that Princeſs, that, "notwithſtanding this act of ceremony was "wanting, in a few days after publication, "Mr. Savage received a Bank-bill of "fifty pounds, and a gracious meſſage "from her Majeſty, by the Lord North and "Guilford, to this effect; "That her Ma-"jeſty was highly pleaſed with the verſes; "that ſhe took particularly kind his lines

"there

"there relating to the King; that he had "permiſſion to write annually on the ſame "ſubject; and that he ſhould yearly receive "the like preſent, till ſomething better "(which was her Majeſty's intention) could "be done for him." After this, he was "permitted to preſent one of his annual po-"ems to her Majeſty, had the honour of "kiſſing her hand, and met with the moſt "gracious reception. Yours, &c."

Such was the performance, and ſuch its reception; a reception which, though by no means unkind, was yet not in the higheſt degree generous: to chain down the genius of a writer to an annual panegyric, ſhewed in the Queen too much deſire of hearing her own praiſes, and a greater regard to herſelf than to him on whom her bounty was conferred. It was a kind of avaricious generoſity, by which flattery was rather purchaſed, than genius rewarded.

Mrs. Oldfield had formerly given him the ſame allowance with much more heroic intention; ſhe had no other view than to enable him to proſecute his ſtudies, and to ſet

himſelf above the want of aſſiſtance, and was contented with doing good without ſtipulating for encomiums.

Mr. Savage however was not at liberty to make exceptions, but was raviſhed with the favours which he had received, and probably yet more with thoſe which he was promiſed; he conſidered himſelf now as a favourite of the Queen, and did not doubt but a few annual poems would eſtabliſh him in ſome profitable employment.

He therefore aſſumed the title of *Volunteer Laureat*, not without ſome reprehenſions from Cibber, who informed him, that the title of *Laureat* was a mark of honour conferred by the King, from whom all honour is derived, and which therefore no man has a right to beſtow upon himſelf; and added, that he might, with equal propriety, ſtyle himſelf a Volunteer Lord, or Volunteer Baronet. It cannot be denied that the remark was juſt; but Savage did not think any title, which was conferred upon Mr. Cibber, ſo honourable as that the uſurpation of it could be imputed to him as an inſtance of very exorbitant vanity, and

and therefore continued to write under the ſame title, and received every year the ſame reward.

He did not appear to conſider theſe encomiums as teſts of his abilities, or as any thing more than annual hints to the Queen of her promiſe, or acts of ceremony, by the performance of which he was intitled to his penſion, and therefore did not labour them with great diligence, or print more than fifty each year, except that for ſome of the laſt years he regularly inſerted them in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, by which they were diſperſed over the kingdom.

Of ſome of them he had himſelf ſo low an opinion, that he intended to omit them in the collection of poems, for which he printed propoſals, and ſolicited ſubſcriptions; nor can it ſeem ſtrange, that, being confined to the ſame ſubject, he ſhould be at ſome times indolent, and at others unſucceſsful; that he ſhould ſometimes delay a diſagreeable taſk, till it was too late to perform it well; or that he ſhould ſometimes repeat the ſame ſentiment on the ſame occaſion, or at others be miſled

by an attempt after novelty to forced conceptions and far-fetched images.

He wrote indeed with a double intention, which ſupplied him with ſome variety; for his buſineſs was to praiſe the Queen for the favours which he had received, and to complain to her of the delay of thoſe which ſhe had promiſed; in ſome of his pieces, therefore, gratitude is predominant, and in ſome diſcontent; in ſome he repreſents himſelf as happy in her patronage, and in others as diſconſolate to find himſelf neglected.

Her promiſe, like other promiſes made to this unfortunate man, was never performed, though he took ſufficient care that it ſhould not be forgotten. The publication of his *Volunteer Laureat* procured him no other reward than a regular remittance of fifty pounds.

He was not ſo depreſſed by his diſappointments as to neglect any opportunity that was offered of advancing his intereſt. When the Princeſs Anne was married, he wrote a poem* upon her departure, only, as he de-

* Printed in the late collection.

clared,

clared, "becauſe it was expected from him," and he was not willing to bar his own proſpects by any appearance of neglect.

He never mentioned any advantage gained by this poem, or any regard that was paid to it; and therefore it is likely that it was conſidered at court as an act of duty to which he was obliged by his dependence, and which it was therefore not neceſſary to reward by any new favour: or perhaps the Queen really intended his advancement, and therefore thought it ſuperfluous to laviſh preſents upon a man whom ſhe intended to eſtabliſh for life.

About this time not only his hopes were in danger of being fruſtrated, but his penſion likewiſe of being obſtructed, by an accidental calumny. The writer of *The Daily Courant*, a paper then publiſhed under the direction of the miniſtry, charged him with a crime, which, though not very great in itſelf, would have been remarkably invidious in him, and might very juſtly have incenſed the Queen againſt him. He was accuſed by name of influencing elections againſt the court, by appearing at the head

of a tory mob; nor did the accuſer fail to aggravate his crime, by repreſenting it as the effect of the moſt atrocious ingratitude, and a kind of rebellion againſt the Queen, who had firſt preſerved him from an infamous death, and afterwards diſtinguiſhed him by her favour, and ſupported him by her charity. The charge, as it was open and confident, was likewiſe by good fortune very particular. The place of the tranſaction was mentioned, and the whole ſeries of the rioter's conduct related. This exactneſs made Mr. Savage's vindication eaſy; for he never had in his life ſeen the place which was declared to be the ſcene of his wickedneſs, nor ever had been preſent in any town when its repreſentatives were choſen. This anſwer he therefore made haſte to publiſh, with all the circumſtances neceſſary to make it credible; and very reaſonably demanded, that the accuſation ſhould be retracted in the ſame paper, that he might no longer ſuffer the imputation of ſedition and ingratitude. This demand was likewiſe preſſed by him in a private letter to the author of the paper, who, either truſting to the protection of thoſe whoſe defence he had undertaken, or

having

having entertained ſome perſonal malice againſt Mr. Savage, or fearing, leſt, by retracting ſo confident an aſſertion, he ſhould impair the credit of his paper, refuſed to give him that ſatisfaction.

Mr. Savage therefore thought it neceſſary, to his own vindication, to proſecute him in the King's Bench; but as he did not find any ill effects from the accuſation, having ſufficiently cleared his innocence, he thought any farther procedure would have the appearance of revenge, and therefore willingly dropped it.

He ſaw ſoon afterwards a proceſs commenced in the ſame court againſt himſelf, on an information in which he was accuſed of writing and publiſhing an obſcene pamphlet.

It was always Mr. Savage's deſire to be diſtinguiſhed; and, when any controverſy became popular, he never wanted ſome reaſon for engaging in it with great ardour, and appearing at the head of the party which he had choſen. As he was never celebrated for his prudence, he had no ſooner taken his ſide,

ſide, and informed himſelf of the chief topicks of the diſpute, than he took all opportunities of aſſerting and propagating his principles, without much regard to his own intereſt, or any other viſible deſign than that of drawing upon himſelf the attention of mankind.

The diſpute between the Biſhop of London and the Chancellor is well known to have been for ſome time the chief topic of political converſation; and therefore Mr. Savage, in purſuance of his character, endeavoured to become conſpicuous among the controvertiſts with which every coffee-houſe was filled on that occaſion. He was an indefatigable oppoſer of all the claims of eccleſiaſtical power, though he did not know on what they were founded; and was therefore no friend to the Biſhop of London. But he had another reaſon for appearing as a warm advocate for Dr. Rundle; for he was the friend of Mr. Foſter and Mr. Thomſon, who were the friends of Mr. Savage.

Thus remote was his intereſt in the queſtion, which however, as he imagined, concerned

cerned him ſo nearly, that it was not ſufficient to harangue and diſpute, but neceſſary, likewiſe to write upon it.

He therefore engaged with great ardour in a new Poem, called by him, *The Progreſs of a Divine*; in which he conducts a profligate prieſt by all the gradations of wickedneſs from a poor curacy in the country, to the higheſt preferments of the church, and deſcribes with that humour which was natural to him, and that knowledge which was extended to all the diverſities of human life, his behaviour in every ſtation; and inſinuates, that this prieſt, thus accompliſhed, found at laſt a patron in the Biſhop of London.

When he was aſked by one of his friends, on what pretence he could charge the biſhop with ſuch an action, he had no more to ſay, than that he had only inverted the accuſation, and that he thought it reaſonable to believe, that he, who obſtructed the riſe of a good man without reaſon, would for bad reaſons promote the exaltation of a villain.

The clergy were univerſally provoked by this ſatire; and Savage, who, as was his

conſtant practice, had ſet his name to his performance, was cenſured in *The Weekly Miſcellany** with ſeverity, which he did not ſeem inclined to forget.

But

* A ſhort ſatire was likewiſe publiſhed in the ſame paper, in which were the following lines:

For cruel murder doom'd to hempen death,
Savage, by royal grace, prolong'd his breath.
Well might you think he ſpent his future years
In prayer, and faſting, and repentant tears.
—But, O vain hope!—the truly Savage cries,
" Prieſts, and their ſlaviſh doctrines, I deſpiſe.
" Shall I———
" Who, by free-thinking to free action fir'd,
" In midnight brawls a deathleſs name acquir'd,
" Now ſtoop to learn of eccleſiaſtic men?—
" —No, arm'd with rhyme, at prieſts I'll take my aim,
" Though prudence bids me murder but their fame."

WEEKLY MISCELLANY.

An anſwer was publiſhed in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, written by an unknown hand, from which the following lines are ſelected:

Transform'd by thoughtleſs rage, and midnight wine,
From malice free, and puſh'd without deſign;
In equal brawl if Savage lung'd a thruſt,
And brought the youth a victim to the duſt;
So ſtrong the hand of accident appears,
The royal hand from guilt and vengeance clears.

Inſtead of waſting " all thy future years,
" Savage, in prayer and vain repentant tears;"

Exert

But a return of invective was not thought a ſufficient puniſhment. The Court of King's Bench was therefore moved againſt him, and he was obliged to return an anſwer to a charge of obſcenity. It was urged, in his defence, that obſcenity was criminal when it was intended to promote the practice of vice; but that Mr. Savage had only introduced obſcene ideas, with the view of expoſing them to deteſtation, and of amending the age, by ſhewing the deformity of wickedneſs. This plea was admitted; and Sir

Exert thy pen to mend a vicious age,
To curb the prieſt, and ſink his high-church rage;
To ſhew what frauds the holy veſtments hide,
The neſts of av'rice, luſt, and pedant pride;
Then change the ſcene, let merit brightly ſhine,
And round the patriot twiſt the wreath divine;
The heavenly guide deliver down to fame;
In well-tun'd lays tranſmit a Foſter's name;
Touch every paſſion with harmonious art,
Exalt the genius, and correct the heart.
Thus future times ſhall royal grace extol;
Thus poliſh'd lines thy preſent fame enrol.
——But grant——
——Maliciouſly that Savage plung'd the ſteel,
And made the youth its ſhining vengeance feel;
My ſoul abhors the act, the man deteſts;
But more the bigotry in prieſtly breaſts.

GENTLEMAN'S MAGAZINE, May 1735.

Philip

Philip Yorke, who then preſided in that court, diſmiſſed the information with encomiums upon the purity and excellence of Mr. Savage's writings.

The proſecution, however, anſwered in ſome meaſure the purpoſe of thoſe by whom it was ſet on foot; for Mr. Savage was ſo far intimidated by it, that, when the edition of his poem was ſold, he did not venture to reprint it; ſo that it was in a ſhort time forgotten, or forgotten by all but thoſe whom it offended.

It is ſaid, that ſome endeavours were uſed to incenſe the Queen againſt him: but he found advocates to obviate at leaſt part of their effect; for though he was never advanced, he ſtill continued to receive his penſion.

This poem drew more infamy upon him than any incident of his life; and, as his conduct cannot be vindicated, it is proper to ſecure his memory from reproach, by informing thoſe whom he made his enemies, that he never intended to repeat the provocation; and that, though, whenever he thought he had any

any reaſon to complain of the clergy, he uſed to threaten them with a new edition of *The Progreſs of a Divine*, it was his calm and ſettled reſolution to ſuppreſs it for ever.

He once intended to have made a better reparation for the folly or injuſtice with which he might be charged, by writing another poem, called *The Progreſs of a Free-thinker*, whom he intended to lead through all the ſtages of vice and folly, to convert him from virtue to wickedneſs, and from religion to infidelity, by all the modiſh ſophiſtry uſed for that purpoſe; and at laſt to diſmiſs him by his own hand into the other world.

That he did not execute this deſign is a real loſs to mankind, for he was too well acquainted with all the ſcenes of debauchery to have failed in his repreſentations of them, and too zealous for virtue not to have repreſented them in ſuch a manner as ſhould expoſe them either to ridicule or deteſtation.

But this plan was, like others, formed and laid aſide, till the vigour of his imagination

was

was ſpent, and the efferveſcence of invention had ſubſided; but ſoon gave way to ſome other deſign, which pleaſed by its novelty for a while, and then was neglected like the former.

He was ſtill in his uſual exigencies, having no certain ſupport but the penſion allowed him by the Queen, which, though it might have kept an exact œconomiſt from want, was very far from being ſufficient for Mr. Savage, who had never been accuſtomed to diſmiſs any of his appetites without the gratification which they ſolicited, and whom nothing but want of money withheld from partaking of every pleaſure that fell within his view.

His conduct with regard to his penſion was very particular. No ſooner had he changed the bill, than he vaniſhed from the ſight of all his acquaintances, and lay for ſome time out of the reach of all the enquiries that friendſhip or curioſity could make after him; at length he appeared again pennyleſs as before, but never informed even thoſe whom he ſeemed to regard moſt, where he had been, nor was his retreat ever diſcovered.

This was his conſtant practice during the whole time that he received the penſion from the Queen: He regularly diſappeared and returned. He indeed affirmed that he retired to ſtudy, and that the money ſupported him in ſolitude for many months; but his friends declared, that the ſhort time in which it was ſpent ſufficiently confuted his own account of his conduct.

His politeneſs and his wit ſtill raiſed him friends, who were deſirous of ſetting him at length free from that indigence by which he had been hitherto oppreſſed; and therefore ſolicited Sir Robert Walpole in his favour with ſo much earneſtneſs, that they obtained a promiſe of the next place that ſhould become vacant, not exceeding two hundred pounds a year. This promiſe was made with an uncommon declaration, "that it was "not the promiſe of a miniſter to a peti-"tioner, but of a friend to his friend."

Mr. Savage now concluded himſelf ſet at eaſe for ever, and, as he obſerves in a poem written on that incident of his life, truſted

and was truſted; but ſoon found that his confidence was ill-grounded, and this friendly promiſe was not inviolable. He ſpent a long time in ſolicitations, and at laſt deſpaired and deſiſted.

He did not indeed deny that he had given the miniſter ſome reaſon to believe that he ſhould not ſtrengthen his own intereſt by advancing him, for he had taken care to diſtinguiſh himſelf in coffee-houſes as an advocate for the miniſtry of the laſt years of Queen Anne, and was always ready to juſtify the conduct, and exalt the character of Lord Bolingbroke, whom he mentions with great regard in an epiſtle upon authors, which he wrote about that time, but was too wiſe to publiſh, and of which only ſome fragments have appeared, inſerted by him in the *Magazine* after his retirement.

To deſpair was not, however, the character of Savage; when one patronage failed, he had recourſe to another. The prince was now extremely popular, and had very liberally rewarded the merit of ſome writers,

whom Mr. Savage did not think ſuperior to himſelf, and therefore he reſolved to addreſs a poem to him.

For this purpoſe he made choice of a ſubject, which could regard only perſons of the higheſt rank and higheſt affluence, and which was therefore proper for a poem intended to procure the patronage of a prince; and having retired for ſome time to Richmond, that he might proſecute his deſign in full tranquillity, without the temptations of pleaſure, or the ſolicitations of creditors, by which his meditations were in equal danger of being diſconcerted, he produced a poem *On Public Spirit, with regard to Public Works.*

The plan of this poem is very extenſive, and compriſes a multitude of topics, each of which might furniſh matter ſufficient for a long performance, and of which ſome have already employed more eminent writers; but as he was perhaps not fully acquainted with the whole extent of his own deſign, and was writing to obtain a ſupply of wants too preſſing to admit of long or accurate enquiries, he paſſes negligently over many publick

works, which, even in his own opinion, deſerved to be more elaborately treated.

But though he may ſometimes diſappoint his reader by tranſient touches upon theſe ſubjects, which have often been conſidered, and therefore naturally raiſe expectations, he muſt be allowed amply to compenſate his omiſſions, by expatiating, in the concluſion of his work, upon a kind of beneficence not yet celebrated by any eminent poet, though it now appears more ſuſceptible of embelliſhments, more adapted to exalt the ideas, and affect the paſſions, than many of thoſe which have hitherto been thought moſt worthy of the ornaments of verſe. The ſettlement of colonies in uninhabited countries, the eſtabliſhment of thoſe in ſecurity, whoſe misfortunes have made their own country no longer pleaſing or ſafe, the acquiſition of property without injury to any, the appropriation of the waſte and luxuriant bounties of nature, and the enjoyment of thoſe gifts which heaven has ſcattered upon regions uncultivated and unoccupied, cannot be conſidered without giving riſe to a great number of pleaſing ideas, and bewildering the imagination in delightful

lightful proſpects; and, therefore, whatever ſpeculations they may produce in thoſe who have confined themſelves to political ſtudies, naturally fixed the attention, and excited the applauſe, of a poet. The politician, when he conſiders men driven into other countries for ſhelter, and obliged to retire to foreſts and deſerts, and paſs their lives and fix their poſterity in the remoteſt corners of the world, to avoid thoſe hardſhips which they ſuffer or fear in their native place, may very properly enquire, why the legiſlature does not provide a remedy for theſe miſeries, rather than encourage an eſcape from them. He may conclude, that the flight of every honeſt man is a loſs to the community; that thoſe who are unhappy without guilt ought to be relieved; and the life, which is overburthened by accidental calamities, ſet at eaſe by the care of the publick; and that thoſe, who have by miſconduct forfeited their claim to favour, ought rather to be made uſeful to the ſociety which they have injured, than driven from it. But the poet is employed in a more pleaſing undertaking than that of propoſing laws, which, however juſt or expedient, will never be made, or endeavouring to reduce to ra-

tional ſchemes of government ſocieties which were formed by chance, and are conducted by the private paſſions of thoſe who preſide in them. He guides the unhappy fugitive from want and perſecution, to plenty, quiet, and ſecurity, and ſeats him in ſcenes of peaceful ſolitude, and undiſturbed repoſe.

Savage has not forgotten, amidſt the pleaſing ſentiments which this proſpect of retirement ſuggeſted to him, to cenſure thoſe crimes which have been generally committed by the diſcoverers of new regions, and to expoſe the enormous wickedneſs of making war upon barbarous nations becauſe they cannot reſiſt, and of invading countries becauſe they are fruitful; of extending navigation only to propagate vice, and of viſiting diſtant lands only to lay them waſte. He has aſſerted the natural equality of mankind, and endeavoured to ſuppreſs that pride which inclines men to imagine that right is the conſequence of power.

His deſcription of the various miſeries which force men to ſeek for refuge in diſtant countries, affords another inſtance of his proficiency

ficiency in the important and extenſive ſtudy of human life; and the tenderneſs with which he recounts them, another proof of his humanity and benevolence.

It is obſervable, that the cloſe of this poem diſcovers a change which experience had made in Mr. Savage's opinions. In a poem written by him in his youth, and publiſhed in his Miſcellanies, he declares his contempt of the contracted views and narrow proſpects of the middle ſtate of life, and declares his reſolution either to tower like the cedar, or be trampled like the ſhrub; but in this poem, though addreſſed to a prince, he mentions this ſtate of life as compriſing thoſe who ought moſt to attract reward, thoſe who merit moſt the confidence of power, and the familiarity of greatneſs; and, accidentally mentioning this paſſage to one of his friends, declared, that in his opinion all the virtue of mankind was comprehended in that ſtate.

In deſcribing villas and gardens, he did not omit to condemn that abſurd cuſtom which prevails among the Engliſh, of permitting ſervants to receive money from ſtrangers for

the entertainment that they receive, and therefore inſerted in his poem theſe lines;

But what the flowering pride of gardens rare,
However royal, or however fair,
If gates, which to acceſs ſhould ſtill give way,
Ope but, like Peter's paradiſe, for pay?
If perquiſited varlets frequent ſtand,
And each new walk muſt a new tax demand?
What foreign eye but with contempt ſurveys?
What Muſe ſhall from oblivion ſnatch their praiſe?

But before the publication of his performance he recollected, that the Queen allowed her garden and cave at Richmond to be ſhewn for money, and that ſhe ſo openly countenanced the practice, that ſhe had beſtowed the privilege of ſhewing them, as a place of profit on a man, whoſe merit ſhe valued herſelf upon rewarding, though ſhe gave him only the liberty of diſgracing his country.

He therefore thought, with more prudence than was often exerted by him, that the publication of theſe lines might be officiouſly repreſented as an inſult upon the Queen, to whom

whom he owed his life and his ſubſiſtence; and that the propriety of his obſervation would be no ſecurity againſt the cenſures which the unſeaſonableneſs of it might draw upon him; he therefore ſuppreſſed the paſſage in the firſt edition, but after the Queen's death thought the ſame caution no longer neceſſary, and reſtored it to the proper place.

The poem was therefore publiſhed without any political faults, and inſcribed to the Prince; but Mr. Savage, having no friend upon whom he could prevail to preſent it to him, had no other method of attracting his obſervation than the publication of frequent advertiſements, and therefore received no reward from his patron, however generous on other occaſions.

This diſappointment he never mentioned without indignation, being by ſome means or other confident that the Prince was not ignorant of his addreſs to him; and inſinuated, that, if any advances in popularity could have been made by diſtinguiſhing him, he

had not written without notice, or without reward.

He was once inclined to have preſented his poem in perſon, and ſent to the printer for a copy with that deſign; but either his opinion changed, or his reſolution deſerted him, and he continued to reſent neglect without attempting to force himſelf into regard.

Nor was the publick much more favourable than his patron, for only ſeventy-two were ſold, though the performance was much commended by ſome whoſe judgement in that kind of writing is generally allowed. But Savage eaſily reconciled himſelf to mankind without imputing any defect to his work, by obſerving that his poem was unluckily publiſhed two days after the prorogation of the parliament, and by conſequence at a time when all thoſe who could be expected to regard it were in the hurry of preparing for their departure, or engaged in taking leave of others upon their diſmiſſion from public affairs.

It muſt be however allowed, in juſtification of the public, that this performance is not the moſt excellent of Mr. Savage's works; and that, though it cannot be denied to contain many ſtriking ſentiments, majeſtic lines, and juſt obſervations, it is in general not ſufficiently poliſhed in the language, or enlivened in the imagery, or digeſted in the plan.

Thus his poem contributed nothing to the alleviation of his poverty, which was ſuch as very few could have ſupported with equal patience; but to which it muſt likewiſe be confeſſed, that few would have been expoſed who received punctually fifty pounds a year; a ſalary which, though by no means equal to the demands of vanity and luxury, is yet found ſufficient to ſupport families above want, and was undoubtedly more than the neceſſities of life require.

But no ſooner had he received his penſion, than he withdrew to his darling privacy, from which he returned in a ſhort time to his former diſtreſs, and for ſome part of the year generally lived by chance, eating only when he was invited to the tables of his acquaintances,

ances, from which the meanneſs of his dreſs often excluded him, when the politeneſs and variety of his converſation would have been thought a ſufficient recompence for his entertainment.

He lodged as much by accident as he dined, and paſſed the night ſometimes in mean houſes, which are ſet open at night to any caſual wanderers, ſometimes in cellars among the riot and filth of the meaneſt and moſt profligate of the rabble; and ſometimes, when he had not money to ſupport even the expences of theſe receptacles, walked about the ſtreets till he was weary, and lay down in the ſummer upon a bulk, or in the winter, with his aſſociates in poverty, among the aſhes of a glaſs-houſe.

In this manner were paſſed thoſe days and thoſe nights which nature had enabled him to have employed in elevated ſpeculations, uſeful ſtudies, or pleaſing converſation. On a bulk, in a cellar, or in a glaſs-houſe among thieves and beggars, was to be found the Author of *The Wanderer*, the man of exalted ſentiments, extenſive views, and curi-

ous

ous obſervations; the man whoſe remarks on life might have aſſiſted the ſtateſman, whoſe ideas of virtue might have enlightened the moraliſt, whoſe eloquence might have influenced ſenates, and whoſe delicacy might have poliſhed courts.

It cannot but be imagined that ſuch neceſſities might ſometimes force him upon diſreputable practices: and it is probable that theſe lines in *The Wanderer* were occaſioned by his reflections on his own conduct:

Though miſery leads to happineſs, and truth,
Unequal to the load, this languid youth,
(O, let none cenſure, if, untried by grief,
If, amidſt woe, untempted by relief,)
He ſtoop'd reluctant to low arts of ſhame,
Which then, ev'n then he ſcorn'd, and bluſh'd to name.

Whoever was acquainted with him was certain to be ſolicited for ſmall ſums, which the frequency of the requeſt made in time conſiderable, and he was therefore quickly ſhunned by thoſe who were become familiar enough to be truſted with his neceſſities; but his rambling manner of life, and conſtant

appearance

appearance at houſes of public reſort, always procured him a new ſucceſſion of friends, whoſe kindneſs had not been exhauſted by repeated requeſts; ſo that he was ſeldom abſolutely without reſources, but had in his utmoſt exigencies this comfort, that he always imagined himſelf ſure of ſpeedy relief.

It was obſerved, that he always aſked favours of this kind without the leaſt ſubmiſſion or apparent conſciouſneſs of dependence, and that he did not ſeem to look upon a compliance with his requeſt as an obligation that deſerved any extraordinary acknowledgements; but a refuſal was reſented by him as an affront, or complained of as an injury; nor did he readily reconcile himſelf to thoſe who either denied to lend, or gave him afterwards any intimation that they expected to be repaid.

He was ſometimes ſo far compaſſionated by thoſe who knew both his merit and diſtreſſes, that they received him into their families, but they ſoon diſcovered him to be a very incommodious inmate; for, being always

ways accuſtomed to an irregular manner of life, he could not confine himſelf to any ſtated hours, or pay any regard to the rules of a family, but would prolong his converſation till midnight, without conſidering that buſineſs might require his friend's application in the morning; and, when he had perſuaded himſelf to retire to bed, was not, without equal difficulty, called up to dinner; it was therefore impoſſible to pay him any diſtinction without the entire ſubverſion of all œconomy, a kind of eſtabliſhment which, wherever he went, he always appeared ambitious to overthrow.

It muſt therefore be acknowledged, in juſtification of mankind, that it was not always by the negligence or coldneſs of his friends that Savage was diſtreſſed, but becauſe it was in reality very difficult to preſerve him long in a ſtate of eaſe. To ſupply him with money was a hopeleſs attempt; for no ſooner did he ſee himſelf maſter of a ſum ſufficient to ſet him free from care for a day, than he became profuſe and luxurious. When once he had entered a tavern, or engaged in a ſcheme of pleaſure, he never retired till want

of

of money obliged him to ſome new expedient. If he was entertained in a family, nothing was any longer to be regarded there but amuſements and jollity; wherever Savage entered, he immediately expected that order and buſineſs ſhould fly before him, that all ſhould thenceforward be left to hazard, and that no dull principle of domeſtic management ſhould be oppoſed to his inclination, or intrude upon his gaiety.

His diſtreſſes, however afflictive, never dejected him; in his loweſt ſtate he wanted not ſpirit to aſſert the natural dignity of wit, and was always ready to repreſs that inſolence which ſuperiority of fortune incited, and to trample on that reputation which roſe upon any other baſis than that of merit: he never admitted any groſs familiarities, or ſubmitted to be treated otherwiſe than as an equal. Once, when he was without lodging, meat, or clothes, one of his friends, a man not indeed remarkable for moderation in his proſperity, left a meſſage, that he deſired to ſee him about nine in the morning. Savage knew that his intention was to aſſiſt him; but was very much diſguſted that he ſhould preſume

ſume to preſcribe the hour of his attendance, and, I believe, refuſed to viſit him, and rejected his kindneſs.

The ſame invincible temper, whether firmneſs or obſtinacy, appeared in his conduct to the Lord Tyrconnel, from whom he very frequently demanded, that the allowance which was once paid him ſhould be reſtored; but with whom he never appeared to entertain for a moment the thought of ſoliciting a reconciliation, and whom he treated at once with all the haughtineſs of ſuperiority, and all the bitterneſs of reſentment. He wrote to him, not in a ſtyle of ſupplication or reſpect, but of reproach, menace, and contempt; and appeared determined, if he ever regained his allowance, to hold it only by the right of conqueſt.

As many more can diſcover, that a man is richer than that he is wiſer than themſelves, ſuperiority of underſtanding is not ſo readily acknowledged as that of fortune; nor is that haughtineſs, which the conſciouſneſs of great abilities incites, borne with the ſame ſubmiſ-

ſion as the tyranny of affluence; and therefore Savage, by aſſerting his claim to deference and regard, and by treating thoſe with contempt whom better fortune animated to rebel againſt him, did not fail to raiſe a great number of enemies in the different claſſes of mankind. Thoſe who thought themſelves raiſed above him by the advantages of riches, hated him becauſe they found no protection from the petulance of his wit. Thoſe who were eſteemed for their writings feared him as a critic, and maligned him as a rival, and almoſt all the ſmaller wits were his profeſſed enemies.

Among theſe Mr. Miller ſo far indulged his reſentment as to introduce him in a farce, and direct him to be perſonated on the ſtage, in a dreſs like that which he then wore; a mean inſult, which only inſinuated that Savage had but one coat, and which was therefore deſpiſed by him rather than reſented; for though he wrote a lampoon againſt Miller, he never printed it: and as no other perſon ought to proſecute that revenge from which the perſon who was injured deſiſted,

I ſhall

I ſhall not preſerve what Mr. Savage ſuppreſſed: of which the publication would indeed have been a puniſhment too ſevere for ſo impotent an aſſault.

The great hardſhips of poverty were to Savage not the want of lodging or of food, but the neglect and contempt which it drew upon him. He complained, that as his affairs grew deſperate, he found his reputation for capacity viſibly decline; that his opinion in queſtions of criticiſm was no longer regarded, when his coat was out of faſhion; and that thoſe who, in the interval of his proſperity, were always encouraging him to great undertakings by encomiums on his genius and aſſurances of ſucceſs, now received any mention of his deſigns with coldneſs, thought that the ſubjects on which he propoſed to write were very difficult, and were ready to inform him, that the event of a poem was uncertain, that an author ought to employ much time in the conſideration of his plan, and not preſume to ſit down to write in confidence of a few curſory ideas, and a ſuperficial knowledge; difficulties were

ſtarted on all ſides, and he was no longer qualified for any performance but *The Volunteer Laureat.*

Yet even this kind of contempt never depreſſed him; for he always preſerved a ſteady confidence in his own capacity, and believed nothing above his reach which he ſhould at any time earneſtly endeavour to attain. He formed ſchemes of the ſame kind with regard to knowledge and to fortune, and flattered himſelf with advances to be made in ſcience, as with riches, to be enjoyed in ſome diſtant period of his life. For the acquiſition of knowledge he was indeed far better qualified than for that of riches; for he was naturally inquiſitive and deſirous of the converſation of thoſe from whom any information was to be obtained, but by no means ſolicitous to improve thoſe opportunities that were ſometimes offered of raiſing his fortune; and he was remarkably retentive of his ideas, which, when once he was in poſſeſſion of them, rarely forſook him; a quality which could never be communicated to his money.

While

While he was thus wearing out his life in expectation that the Queen would ſome time recollect her promiſe, he had recourſe to the uſual practice of writers, and publiſhed propoſals for printing his works by ſubſcription, to which he was encouraged by the ſucceſs of many who had not a better right to the favour of the publick; but, whatever was the reaſon, he did not find the world equally inclined to favour him; and he obſerved with ſome diſcontent, that, though he offered his works at half a guinea, he was able to procure but a ſmall number in compariſon with thoſe who ſubſcribed twice as much to Duck.

Nor was it without indignation that he ſaw his propoſals neglected by the Queen, who patroniſed Mr. Duck's with uncommon ardour, and incited a competition among thoſe who attended the court, who ſhould moſt promote his intereſt, and who ſhould firſt offer a ſubſcription. This was a diſtinction to which Mr. Savage made no ſcruple of aſſerting that his birth, his misfortunes, and his genius, gave him a fairer title, than

could be pleaded by him on whom it was conferred.

Savage's applications were however not univerſally unſucceſsful; for ſome of the nobility countenanced his deſign, encouraged his propoſals, and ſubſcribed with great liberality. He related of the Duke of Chandos particularly, that, upon receiving his propoſals, he ſent him ten guineas.

But the money which his ſubſcriptions afforded him was not leſs volatile than that which he received from his other ſchemes; whenever a ſubſcription was paid him, he went to a tavern; and, as money ſo collected is neceſſarily received in ſmall ſums, he never was able to ſend his poems to the preſs, but for many years continued his ſolicitation, and ſquandered whatever he obtained.

This project of printing his works was frequently revived; and, as his propoſals grew obſolete, new ones were printed with freſher dates. To form ſchemes for the publication was one of his favourite amuſements; nor was he ever more at eaſe than when,

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with any friend who readily fell-in with his ſchemes, he was adjuſting the print, forming the advertiſements, and regulating the diſperſion of his new edition, which he really intended ſome time to publiſh, and which, as long as experience had ſhewn him the impoſſibility of printing the volume together, he at laſt determined to divide into weekly or monthly numbers, that the profits of the firſt might ſupply the expences of the next.

Thus he ſpent his time in mean expedients and tormenting ſuſpenſe, living for the greateſt part in the fear of proſecutions from his creditors, and conſequently ſkulking in obſcure parts of the town, of which he was no ſtranger to the remoteſt corners. But wherever he came, his addreſs ſecured him friends, whom his neceſſities ſoon alienated; ſo that he had perhaps a more numerous acquaintance than any man ever before attained, there being ſcarcely any perſon eminent on any account to whom he was not known, or whoſe character he was not in ſome degree able to delineate.

To the acquiſition of this extenſive acquaintance every circumſtance of his life contributed. He excelled in the arts of converſation, and therefore willingly practiſed them: He had ſeldom any home, or even a lodging in which he could be private; and therefore was driven into public-houſes for the common conveniences of life, and ſupports of nature. He was always ready to comply with every invitation, having no employment to withhold him, and often no money to provide for himſelf; and by dining with one company, he never failed of obtaining an introduction into another.

Thus diſſipated was his life, and thus caſual his ſubſiſtence; yet did not the diſtraction of his views hinder him from reflection, nor the uncertainty of his condition depreſs his gaiety. When he had wandered about without any fortunate adventure by which he was led into a tavern, he ſometimes retired into the fields, and was able to employ his mind in ſtudy, or amuſe it with pleaſing imaginations; and ſeldom appeared to be melancholy, but when ſome ſudden misfortune had juſt fallen upon him, and even then in a few moments

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he would diſentangle himſelf from his perplexity, adopt the ſubject of converſation, and apply his mind wholly to the objects that others preſented to it.

This life, unhappy as it may be already imagined, was yet imbittered, in 1738, with new calamities. The death of the Queen deprived him of all the proſpects of preferment with which he ſo long entertained his imagination; and, as Sir Robert Walpole had before given him reaſon to believe that he never intended the performance of his promiſe, he was now abandoned again to fortune.

He was however, at that time, ſupported by a friend; and as it was not his cuſtom to look out for diſtant calamities, or to feel any other pain than that which forced itſelf upon his ſenſes, he was not much afflicted at his loſs, and perhaps comforted himſelf that his penſion would be now continued without the annual tribute of a panegyric.

Another expectation contributed likewiſe to ſupport him: he had taken a reſolution to write a ſecond tragedy upon the ſtory of Sir Thomas

Thomas Overbury, in which he preſerved a few lines of his former play, but made a total alteration of the plan, added new incidents, and introduced new characters; ſo that it was a new tragedy, not a revival of the former.

Many of his friends blamed him for not making choice of another ſubject; but, in vindication of himſelf, he aſſerted, that it was not eaſy to find a better; and that he thought it his intereſt to extinguiſh the memory of the firſt tragedy, which he could only do by writing one leſs defective upon the ſame ſtory; by which he ſhould entirely defeat the artifice of the booksellers, who, after the death of any author of reputation, are always induſtrious to ſwell his works, by uniting his worſt productions with his beſt.

In the execution of this ſcheme, however, he proceeded but ſlowly, and probably only employed himſelf upon it when he could find no other amuſement; but he pleaſed himſelf with counting the profits, and perhaps imagined, that the theatrical reputation which he was about to acquire, would be equivalent to

all that he had loſt by the death of his patroneſs.

He did not, in conſidence of his approaching riches, neglect the meaſures proper to ſecure the continuance of his penſion, though ſome of his favourers thought him culpable for omitting to write on her death; but on her birth-day next year, he gave a proof of the ſolidity of his judgement, and the power of his genius. He knew that the track of elegy had been ſo long beaten, that it was impoſſible to travel in it without treading in the footſteps of thoſe who had gone before him; and that therefore it was neceſſary, that he might diſtinguiſh himſelf from the herd of encomiaſts, to find out ſome new walk of funeral panegyric.

This difficult taſk he performed in ſuch a manner, that his poem may be juſtly ranked among the beſt pieces that the death of princes has produced. By transferring the mention of her death to her birth-day, he has formed a happy combination of topics, which any other man would have thought it very difficult to connect in one view, but which he has

has united in ſuch a manner, that the relation between them appears natural; and it may be juſtly ſaid, that what no other man would have thought on, it now appears ſcarcely poſſible for any man to miſs.

The beauty of this peculiar combination of images is ſo maſterly, that it is ſufficient to ſet this poem above cenſure; and therefore it is not neceſſary to mention many other delicate touches which may be found in it, and which would deſervedly be admired in any other performance.

To theſe proofs of his genius may be added, from the ſame poem, an inſtance of his prudence, an excellence for which he was not ſo often diſtinguiſhed; he does not forget to remind the King, in the moſt delicate and artful manner, of continuing his penſion.

With regard to the ſucceſs of this addreſs, he was for ſome time in ſuſpence, but was in no great degree ſolicitous about it; and continued his labour upon his new tragedy with great tranquillity, till the friend who had for a conſiderable time ſupported him, removing his

his family to another place, took occaſion to diſmiſs him. It then became neceſſary to enquire more diligently what was determined in his affair, having reaſon to ſuſpect that no great favour was intended him, becauſe he had not received his penſion at the uſual time.

It is ſaid, that he did not take thoſe methods of retrieving his intereſt, which were moſt likely to ſucceed; and ſome of thoſe who were employed in the Exchequer, cautioned him againſt too much violence in his proceedings; but Mr. Savage, who ſeldom regulated his conduct by the advice of others, gave way to his paſſion, and demanded of Sir Robert Walpole, at his levee, the reaſon of the diſtinction that was made between him and the other penſioners of the Queen, with a degree of roughneſs which perhaps determined him to withdraw what had been only delayed.

Whatever was the crime of which he was accuſed or ſuſpected, and whatever influence was employed againſt him, he received ſoon after an account that took from him all hopes

of

of regaining his penſion; and he had now no proſpect of ſubſiſtence but from his play, and he knew no way of living for the time required to finiſh it.

So peculiar were the misfortunes of this man, deprived of an eſtate and title by a particular law, expoſed and abandoned by a mother, defrauded by a mother of a fortune which his father had allotted him, he entered the world without a friend; and though his abilities forced themſelves into eſteem and reputation, he was never able to obtain any real advantage, and whatever proſpects aroſe were always intercepted as he began to approach them. The King's intentions in his favour were fruſtrated; his dedication to the Prince, whoſe generoſity on every other occaſion was eminent, procured him no reward; Sir Robert Walpole, who valued himſelf upon keeping his promiſe to others, broke it to him without regret; and the bounty of the Queen was, after her death, withdrawn from him, and from him only.

Such were his misfortunes, which yet he bore, not only with decency, but with cheerfulneſs:

ſulneſs; nor was his gaiety clouded even by his laſt diſappointments, though he was in a ſhort time reduced to the loweſt degree of diſtreſs, and often wanted both lodging and food. At this time he gave another inſtance of the inſurmountable obſtinacy of his ſpirit: his clothes were worn out; and he received notice, that at a coffee-houſe ſome clothes and linen were left for him: the perſon who ſent them did not, I believe, inform him to whom he was to be obliged, that he might ſpare the perplexity of acknowledging the benefit; but though the offer was ſo far generous, it was made with ſome neglect of ceremonies, which Mr. Savage ſo much reſented, that he refuſed the preſent, and declined to enter the houſe till the clothes that had been deſigned for him were taken away.

His diſtreſs was now publickly known, and his friends, therefore, thought it proper to concert ſome meaſures for his relief; and one of them wrote a letter to him, in which he expreſſed his concern "for the miſerable "withdrawing of his penſion;" and gave him hopes, that in a ſhort time he ſhould find himſelf ſupplied with a competence, "without

"without any dependence on thoſe little "creatures which we are pleaſed to call the "Great."

The ſcheme propoſed for this happy and independent ſubſiſtence, was, that he ſhould retire into Wales, and receive an allowance of fifty pounds a year, to be raiſed by a ſubſcription, on which he was to live privately in a cheap place, without aſpiring any more to affluence, or having any farther care of reputation.

This offer Mr. Savage gladly accepted, though with intentions very different from thoſe of his friends; for they propoſed that he ſhould continue an exile from London for ever, and ſpend all the remaining part of his life at Swanſea; but he deſigned only to take the opportunity, which their ſcheme offered him, of retreating for a ſhort time, that he might prepare his play for the ſtage, and his other works for the preſs, and then to return to London to exhibit his tragedy, and live upon the profits of his own labour.

With regard to his works, he propoſed very great improvements, which would have

required much time, or great application; and when he had finiſhed them, he deſigned to do juſtice to his ſubſcribers, by publiſhing them according to his propoſals.

As he was ready to entertain himſelf with future pleaſures, he had planned out a ſcheme of life for the country, of which he had no knowledge but from paſtorals and ſongs. He imagined that he ſhould be tranſported to ſcenes of flowery felicity, like thoſe which one poet has reflected to another; and had projected a perpetual round of innocent pleaſures, of which he ſuſpected no interruption from pride, or ignorance, or brutality.

With theſe expectations he was ſo enchanted, that when he was once gently reproached by a friend for ſubmitting to live upon a ſubſcription, and adviſed rather by a reſolute exertion of his abilities to ſupport himſelf, he could not bear to debar himſelf from the happineſs which was to be found in the calm of a cottage, or loſe the opportunity of liſtening, without intermiſſion, to the melody of the nightingale, which he believed was to be heard from every bramble, and which he did not fail to mention as a

very important part of the happineſs of a country life.

While this ſcheme was ripening, his friends directed him to take a lodging in the liberties of the Fleet, that he might be ſecure from his creditors, and ſent him every Monday a guinea, which he commonly ſpent before the next morning, and truſted, after his uſual manner, the remaining part of the week to the bounty of fortune.

He now began very ſenſibly to feel the miſeries of dependence. Thoſe by whom he was to be ſupported, began to preſcribe to him with an air of authority, which he knew not how decently to reſent, nor patiently to bear; and he ſoon diſcovered, from the conduct of moſt of his ſubſcribers, that he was yet in the hands of "little creatures."

Of the inſolence that he was obliged to ſuffer, he gave many inſtances, of which none appeared to raiſe his indignation to a greater height, than the method which was taken of furniſhing him with clothes. Inſtead of conſulting him, and allowing him to ſend a taylor his orders for what they thought

thought proper to allow him, they propoſed to ſend for a taylor to take his meaſure, and then to conſult how they ſhould equip him.

This treatment was not very delicate, nor was it ſuch as Savage's humanity would have ſuggeſted to him on a like occaſion; but it had ſcarcely deſerved mention, had it not, by affecting him in an uncommon degree, ſhewn the peculiarity of his character. Upon hearing the deſign that was formed, he came to the lodging of a friend with the moſt violent agonies of rage; and, being aſked what it could be that gave him ſuch diſturbance, he replied with the utmoſt vehemence of indignation, "That they had ſent for a taylor to meaſure him."

How the affair ended was never enquired, for fear of renewing his uneaſineſs. It is probable that, upon recollection, he ſubmitted with a good-grace to what he could not avoid, and that he diſcovered no reſentment where he had no power.

He was, however, not humbled to implicit and univerſal compliance; for when the gen-

tleman, who had firſt informed him of the deſign to ſupport him by a ſubſcription, attempted to procure a reconciliation with the Lord Tyrconnel, he could by no means be prevailed upon to comply with the meaſures that were propoſed.

A letter was written for him* to Sir William Lemon, to prevail upon him to interpoſe his good offices with Lord Tyrconnel, in which he ſolicited Sir William's aſſiſtance, "for a man who really needed it as much "as any man could well do;" and informed him, that he was retiring "for ever to a "place where he ſhould no more trouble his "relations, friends, or enemies;" he confeſſed, that his paſſion had betrayed him to ſome conduct with regard to Lord Tyrconnel, for which he could not but heartily aſk his pardon; and as he imagined Lord Tyrconnel's paſſion might be yet ſo high, that he would not "receive a letter from him," begged that Sir William would endeavour to ſoften him; and expreſſed his hopes that he would comply with his requeſt, and that "ſo ſmall

* By Mr. Pope.

"a rela-

"a relation would not harden his heart "againſt him."

That any man ſhould preſume to dictate a letter to him, was not very agreeable to Mr. Savage; and therefore he was, before he had opened it, not much inclined to approve it. But when he read it, he found it contained ſentiments entirely oppoſite to his own, and, as he aſſerted, to the truth; and therefore, inſtead of copying it, wrote his friend a letter full of maſculine reſentment and warm expoſtulations. He very juſtly obſerved, that the ſtyle was too ſupplicatory, and the repreſentation too abject, and that he ought at leaſt to have made him complain with "the dignity of a gentleman in diſtreſs." He declared that he would not write the paragraph in which he was to aſk Lord Tyrconnel's pardon; for, "he deſpiſed his par-"don, and therefore could not heartily, and "would not hypocritically, aſk it." He remarked, that his friend made a very unreaſonable diſtinction between himſelf and him; for, ſays he, when you mention men of high rank "in your own character," they are "thoſe little creatures whom we are pleaſed

"to call the great;" but when you addreſs them "in mine," no ſervility is ſufficiently humble. He then with great propriety explained the ill conſequences which might be expected from ſuch a letter, which his relations would print in their own defence, and which would for ever be produced as a full anſwer to all that he ſhould alledge againſt them; for he always intended to publiſh a minute account of the treatment which he had received. It is to be remembered, to the honour of the gentleman by whom this letter was drawn up, that he yielded to Mr. Savage's reaſons, and agreed that it ought to be ſuppreſſed.

After many alterations and delays, a ſubſcription was at length raiſed, which did not amount to fifty pounds a year, though twenty were paid by one gentleman; ſuch was the generoſity of mankind, that what had been done by a player without ſolicitation, could not now be effected by application and intereſt; and Savage had a great number to court and to obey for a penſion leſs than that which Mrs. Oldfield paid him without exacting any ſervilities.

Mr.

Mr. Savage however was ſatisfied, and willing to retire, and was convinced that the allowance, though ſcanty, would be more than ſufficient for him, being now determined to commence a rigid œconomiſt, and to live according to the exacteſt rules of frugality; for nothing was in his opinion more contemptible than a man, who, when he knew his income, exceeded it; and yet he confeſſed, that inſtances of ſuch folly were too common, and lamented that ſome men were not to be truſted with their own money.

Full of theſe ſalutary reſolutions, he left London in July 1739, having taken leave with great tenderneſs of his friends, and parted from the author of this narrative with tears in his eyes. He was furniſhed with fifteen guineas, and informed, that they would be ſufficient, not only for the expence of his journey, but for his ſupport in Wales for ſome time; and that there remained but little more of the firſt collection. He promiſed a ſtrict adherence to his maxims of parcimony, and went away in the ſtage-coach; nor did

his friends expect to hear from him, till he informed them of his arrival at Swanſea.

But when they leaſt expected, arrived a letter dated the fourteenth day after his departure, in which he ſent them word, that he was yet upon the road, and without money; and that he therefore could not proceed without a remittance. They then ſent him the money that was in their hands, with which he was enabled to reach Briſtol, from whence he was to go to Swanſea by water.

At Briſtol he found an embargo laid upon the ſhipping, ſo that he could not immediately obtain a paſſage; and being therefore obliged to ſtay there ſome time, he, with his uſual felicity, ingratiated himſelf with many of the principal inhabitants, was invited to their houſes, diſtinguiſhed at their public feaſts, and treated with a regard that gratified his vanity, and therefore eaſily engaged his affection.

He began very early after his retirement to complain of the conduct of his friends in London,

London, and irritated many of them ſo much by his letters, that they withdrew, however honourably, their contributions; and it is believed, that little more was paid him than the twenty pounds a year, which were allowed him by the gentleman who propoſed the ſubſcription.

After ſome ſtay at Briſtol he retired to Swanſea, the place originally propoſed for his reſidence, where he lived about a year, very much diſſatisfied with the diminution of his ſalary; but contracted, as in other places, acquaintance with thoſe who were moſt diſtinguiſhed in that country, among whom he has celebrated Mr. Powel and Mrs. Jones, by ſome verſes which he inſerted in *The Gentleman's Magazine**.

Here he compleated his tragedy, of which two acts were wanting when he left London, and was deſirous of coming to town to bring it upon the ſtage. This deſign was very warmly oppoſed, and he was adviſed by his chief benefactor to put it into the hands of

* Reprinted in the late collection.

Mr.

Mr. Thomſon and Mr. Mallet, that it might be fitted for the ſtage, and to allow his friends to receive the profits, out of which an annual penſion ſhould be paid him.

This propoſal he rejected with the utmoſt contempt. He was by no means convinced that the judgment of thoſe, to whom he was required to ſubmit, was ſuperior to his own. He was now determined, as he expreſſed it, to be "no longer kept in leading-ſtrings," and had no elevated idea of "his bounty, "who propoſed to penſion him out of the "profits of his own labours."

He attempted in Wales to promote a ſubſcription for his works, and had once hopes of ſucceſs; but in a ſhort time afterwards formed a reſolution of leaving that part of the country, to which he thought it not reaſonable to be confined for the gratification of thoſe, who, having promiſed him a liberal income, had no ſooner baniſhed him to a remote corner, than they reduced his allowance to a ſalary ſcarcely equal to the neceſſities of life.

His

His reſentment of this treatment, which, in his own opinion at leaſt, he had not deſerved, was ſuch, that he broke off all correſpondence with moſt of his contributors, and appeared to conſider them as perſecutors and oppreſſors; and in the latter part of his life declared, that their conduct toward him, ſince his departure from London, "had "been perfidiouſneſs improving on perfidi-"ouſneſs, and inhumanity on inhumanity."

It is not to be ſuppoſed, that the neceſſities of Mr. Savage did not ſometimes incite him to ſatirical exaggerations of the behaviour of thoſe by whom he thought himſelf reduced to them. But it muſt be granted, that the diminution of his allowance was a great hardſhip, and that thoſe who withdrew their ſubſcription from a man, who, upon the faith of their promiſe, had gone into a kind of baniſhment, and abandoned all thoſe by whom he had been before relieved in his diſtreſſes, will find it no eaſy taſk to vindicate their conduct.

It may be alledged, and perhaps juſtly, that he was petulant and contemptuous, that he

he more frequently reproached his ſubſcribers for not giving him more, than thanked them for what he received; but it is to be remembered, that this conduct, and this is the worſt charge that can be drawn up againſt him, did them no real injury; and that it therefore ought rather to have been pitied than reſented; at leaſt, the reſentment it might provoke ought to have been generous and manly; epithets which his conduct will hardly deſerve that ſtarves the man whom he has perſuaded to put himſelf into his power.

It might have been reaſonably demanded by Savage, that they ſhould, before they had taken away what they promiſed, have replaced him in his former ſtate, that they ſhould have taken no advantages from the ſituation to which the appearance of their kindneſs had reduced him, and that he ſhould have been recalled to London before he was abandoned. He might juſtly repreſent, that he ought to have been conſidered as a lion in the toils, and demand to be releaſed before the dogs ſhould be looſed upon him.

He endeavoured, indeed, to relieve himſelf, and, with an intent to return to London,

don, went to Briſtol, where a repetition of the kindneſs which he had formerly found invited him to ſtay. He was not only careſſed and treated, but had a collection made for him of about thirty pounds, with which it had been happy if he had immediately departed for London; but his negligence did not ſuffer him to conſider, that ſuch proofs of kindneſs were not often to be expected, and that this ardour of benevolence was in a great degree the effect of novelty, and might, probably, be every day leſs; and therefore he took no care to improve the happy time, but was encouraged by one favour to hope for another, till at length generoſity was exhauſted, and officiouſneſs wearied.

Another part of his miſconduct was the practice of prolonging his viſits to unſeaſonable hours, and diſconcerting all the families into which he was admitted. This was an error in a place of commerce which all the charms of his converſation could not compenſate; for what trader would purchaſe ſuch airy ſatisfaction by the loſs of ſolid gain, which muſt be the conſequence of midnight merriment, as thoſe hours which were gained

gained at night were generally loſt in the morning?

Thus Mr. Savage, after the curioſity of the inhabitants was gratified, found the number of his friends daily decreaſing, perhaps without ſuſpecting for what reaſon their conduct was altered; for he ſtill continued to haraſs with his nocturnal intruſions, thoſe that yet countenanced him, and admitted him to their houſes.

But he did not ſpend all the time of his reſidence at Briſtol in viſits or at taverns, for he ſometimes returned to his ſtudies, and began ſeveral conſiderable deſigns. When he felt an inclination to write, he always retired from the knowledge of his friends, and lay hid in an obſcure part of the ſuburbs, till he found himſelf again deſirous of company, to which it is likely that intervals of ſilence made him more welcome.

He was always full of his deſign of returning to London, to bring his tragedy upon the ſtage; but, having neglected to depart with the money that was raiſed for him, he could

not afterwards procure a ſum ſufficient to defray the expences of his journey; nor perhaps would a freſh ſupply have had any other effect, than, by putting immediate pleaſures in his power, to have driven the thoughts of his journey out of his mind.

While he was thus ſpending the day in contriving a ſcheme for the morrow, diſtreſs ſtole upon him by imperceptible degrees. His conduct had already wearied ſome of thoſe who were at firſt enamoured of his converſation; but he might, perhaps, ſtill have devolved to others, whom he might have entertained with equal ſucceſs, had not the decay of his clothes made it no longer conſiſtent with their vanity to admit him to their tables, or to aſſociate with him in public places. He now began to find every man from home at whoſe houſe he called; and was therefore no longer able to procure the neceſſaries of life, but wandered about the town, ſlighted and neglected, in queſt of a dinner, which he did not always obtain.

To complete his miſery, he was purſued by the officers for ſmall debts which he had con-

tracted; and was therefore obliged to withdraw from the ſmall number of friends from whom he had ſtill reaſon to hope for favours. His cuſtom was to lie in bed the greateſt part of the day, and to go out in the dark with the utmoſt privacy, and after having paid his viſit return again before morning to his lodging, which was in the garret of an obſcure inn.

Being thus excluded on one hand, and confined on the other, he ſuffered the utmoſt extremities of poverty, and often faſted ſo long that he was ſeized with faintneſs, and had loſt his appetite, not being able to bear the ſmell of meat, till the action of his ſtomach was reſtored by a cordial.

In this diſtreſs, he received a remittance of five pounds from London, with which he provided himſelf a decent coat, and determined to go to London, but unhappily ſpent his money at a favourite tavern. Thus was he again confined to Briſtol, where he was every day hunted by bailiffs. In this exigence he once more found a friend, who ſheltered him in his houſe, though at the

uſual inconveniences with which his company was attended; for he could neither be perſuaded to go to bed in the night, nor to riſe in the day.

It is obſervable, that in theſe various ſcenes of miſery, he was always diſengaged and cheerful: he at ſome times purſued his ſtudies, and at others continued or enlarged his epiſtolary correſpondence; nor was he ever ſo far dejected as to endeavour to procure an increaſe of his allowance by any other methods than accuſations and reproaches.

He had now no longer any hopes of aſſiſtance from his friends at Briſtol, who, as merchants, and by conſequence ſufficiently ſtudious of profit, cannot be ſuppoſed to have looked with much compaſſion upon negligence and extravagance, or to think any excellence equivalent to a fault of ſuch conſequence as neglect of œconomy. It is natural to imagine, that many of thoſe, who would have relieved his real wants, were diſcouraged from the exertion of their benevolence by obſervation of the uſe which was made of their favours, and conviction that

relief would only be momentary, and that the ſame neceſſity would quickly return.

At laſt he quitted the houſe of his friend, and returned to his lodging at the inn, ſtill intending to ſet out in a few days for London; but on the 10th of January 1742-3, having been at ſupper with two of his friends, he was at his return to his lodgings arreſted for a debt of about eight pounds, which he owed at a coffee-houſe, and conducted to the houſe of a ſheriff's officer. The account which he gives of this misfortune, in a letter to one of the gentlemen with whom he had ſupped, is too remarkable to be omitted.

"It was not a little unfortunate for me, "that I ſpent yeſterday's evening with you; "becauſe the hour hindered me from enter- "ing on my new lodging; however, I have "now got one but ſuch an one, as I believe "nobody would chuſe.

"I was arreſted at the ſuit of Mrs. Read, "juſt as I was going up ſtairs to bed, at Mr. "Bowyer's; but taken in ſo private a man- "ner, that I believe nobody at the White

" Lion is appriſed of it. Though I let the " officers know the ſtrength (or rather weak- " neſs) of my pocket, yet they treated me " with the utmoſt civility; and even when " they conducted me to confinement, it was " in ſuch a manner, that I verily believe I " could have eſcaped, which I would rather " be ruined than have done, notwithſtanding " the whole amount of my finances was but " three pence halfpenny.

" In the firſt place I muſt inſiſt, that you " will induſtriouſly conceal this from Mrs. " S——s, becauſe I would not have her " good-nature ſuffer that pain, which, I " know, ſhe would be apt to feel on this oc- " caſion.

" Next, I conjure you, dear Sir, by all " the ties of friendſhip, by no means to have " one uneaſy thought on my account; but " to have the ſame pleaſantry of counte- " nance, and unruffled ſerenity of mind, " which (God be praiſed!) I have in this, " and have had in a much ſeverer cala- " mity. Furthermore, I charge you, if " you value my friendſhip as truly as I do

" yours, not to utter, or even harbour, the " leaſt reſentment againſt Mrs. Read. I be- " lieve ſhe has ruined me, but I freely for- " give her; and (though I will never more " have any intimacy with her) I would, at a " due diſtance, rather do her an act of good, " than ill will. Laſtly (pardon the expreſ- " ſion), I abſolutely command you not to " offer me any pecuniary aſſiſtance, nor to " attempt getting me any from any one of " your friends. At another time, or on " any other occaſion, you may, dear friend, " be well aſſured, I would rather write to " you in the ſubmiſſive ſtyle of a requeſt, " than that of a peremptory command.

" However, that my truly valuable friend " may not think I am too proud to aſk a fa- " vour, let me entreat you to let me have " your boy to attend me for this day, not " only for the ſake of ſaving me the expence " of porters, but for the delivery of ſome let- " ters to people whoſe names I would not " have known to ſtrangers.

" The civil treatment I have thus far met " from thoſe whoſe priſoner I am, makes me " thankful

" thankful to the Almighty, that, though he
" has thought fit to viſit me (on my birth-
" night) with affliction, yet (ſuch is his great
" goodneſs!) my affliction is not without al-
" leviating circumſtances. I murmur not;
" but am all reſignation to the divine will.
" As to the world, I hope that I ſhall be en-
" dued by Heaven with that preſence of
" mind, that ſerene dignity in misfortune,
" that conſtitutes the character of a true no-
" bleman; a dignity far beyond that of co-
" ronets; a nobility ariſing from the juſt
" principles of philoſophy, refined and exalt-
" ed by thoſe of chriſtianity."——

He continued five days at the officer's, in hopes that he ſhould be able to procure bail, and avoid the neceſſity of going to priſon. The ſtate in which he paſſed his time, and the treatment which he received, are very juſtly expreſſed by him in a letter which he wrote to a friend: " The whole day," ſays he, " has been employed in various peoples'
" filling my head with their fooliſh chimeri-
" cal ſyſtems, which has obliged me coolly
" (as far as nature will admit) to digeſt, and
" accommodate myſelf to, every different

" perſon's way of thinking; hurried from
" one wild ſyſtem to another, till it has quite
" made a chaos of my imagination, and no-
" thing done—promiſed—diſappointed—or-
" dered to ſend, every hour, from one part
" of the town to the other."——

When his friends, who had hitherto careſſed and applauded, found that to give bail and pay the debt was the ſame, they all refuſed to preſerve him from a priſon at the expence of eight pounds; and therefore, after having been for ſome time at the officer's houſe, " at an immenſe expence," as he obſerves in his letter, he was at length removed to Newgate.

This expence he was enabled to ſupport by the generoſity of Mr. Naſh at Bath, who, upon receiving from him an account of his condition, immediately ſent him five guineas, and promiſed to promote his ſubſcription at Bath with all his intereſt.

By his removal to Newgate, he obtained at leaſt a freedom from ſuſpenſe, and reſt from the diſturbing viciſſitudes of hope and diſappointment; he now found that his friends

friends were only companions, who were willing to ſhare his gaiety, but not to partake of his misfortunes; and therefore he no longer expected any aſſiſtance from them.

It muſt however be obſerved of one gentleman, that he offered to releaſe him by paying the debt; but that Mr. Savage would not conſent, I ſuppoſe becauſe he thought he had before been too burthenſome to him.

He was offered by ſome of his friends, that a collection ſhould be made for his enlargement; but he "treated the propoſal," and declared, "he ſhould again treat it, with "diſdain. As to writing any mendicant letters, he had too high a ſpirit, and determined only to write to ſome miniſters of "ſtate, to try to regain his penſion."

He continued to complain of thoſe that had ſent him into the country, and objected to them, that he had "loſt the profits of his "play, which had been finiſhed three years;" and in another letter declares his reſolution to publiſh a pamphlet, that the world might know how "he had been uſed."

This pamphlet was never written; for he in a very ſhort time recovered his uſual tranquillity, and chearfully applied himſelf to more inoffenſive ſtudies. He indeed ſteadily declared, that he was promiſed a yearly allowance of fifty pounds, and never received half the ſum; but he ſeemed to reſign himſelf to that as well as to other misfortunes, and loſe the remembrance of it in his amuſements and employments.

The chearfulneſs with which he bore his confinement, appears from the following letter, which he wrote, January the 30th, to one of his friends in London:

"I now write to you from my confine-
"ment in Newgate, where I have been ever
"ſince Monday laſt was ſe'nnight, and
"where I enjoy myſelf with much more
"tranquillity than I have known for upwards
"of a twelvemonth paſt; having a room
"entirely to myſelf, and purſuing the amuſe-
"ment of my poetical ſtudies, uninterrupted,
"and agreeable to my mind. I thank the
"Almighty, I am now all collected in my-
"ſelf; and, though my perſon is in confine-
"ment,

"ment, my mind can expatiate on ample "and uſeful ſubjects with all the freedom "imaginable. I am now more converſant "with the Nine than ever; and if, inſtead "of a Newgate-bird, I may be allowed to be "a bird of the Muſes, I aſſure you, Sir, I "ſing very freely in my cage; ſometimes "indeed in the plaintive notes of the night-"ingale; but, at others, in the chearful "ſtrains of the lark."——

In another letter he obſerves, that he ranges from one ſubject to another, without confining himſelf to any particular taſk; and that he was employed one week upon one attempt, and the next upon another.

Surely the fortitude of this man deſerves, at leaſt, to be mentioned with applauſe; and, whatever faults may be imputed to him, the virtue of ſuffering well cannot be denied him. The two powers which, in the opinion of Epictetus, conſtituted a wiſe man, are thoſe of bearing and forbearing, which cannot indeed be affirmed to have been equally poſſeſſed by Savage; and indeed the want of one obliged him very frequently to practiſe the other.

He was treated by Mr. Dagg, the keeper of the priſon, with great humanity; was ſupported by him at his own table without any certainty of recompence; had a room to himſelf, to which he could at any time retire from all diſturbance; was allowed to ſtand at the door of the priſon, and ſometimes taken out into the fields; ſo that he ſuffered fewer hardſhips in priſon than he had been accuſtomed to undergo in the greateſt part of his life.

The keeper did not confine his benevolence to a gentle execution of his office, but made ſome overtures to the creditor for his releaſe, though without effect; and continued, during the whole time of his impriſonment, to treat him with the utmoſt tenderneſs and civility.

Virtue is undoubtedly moſt laudable in that ſtate which makes it moſt difficult; and therefore the humanity of a gaoler certainly deſerves this public atteſtation; and the man, whoſe heart has not been hardened by ſuch an employment, may be juſtly propoſed as a pattern of benevolence. If an inſcription was

once

once engraved "to the honeſt toll-gatherer," leſs honours ought not to be paid "to the "tender gaoler."

Mr. Savage very frequently received viſits, and ſometimes preſents, from his acquaintances; but they did not amount to a ſubſiſtence, for the greater part of which he was indebted to the generoſity of this keeper; but theſe favours, however they might endear to him the particular perſons from whom he received them, were very far from impreſſing upon his mind any advantageous ideas of the people of Briſtol, and therefore he thought he could not more properly employ himſelf in priſon, than in writing a poem called "London and Briſtol delineated."

When he had brought this poem to its preſent ſtate, which, without conſidering the chaſm, is not perfect, he wrote to London an account of his deſign, and informed his friend, that he was determined to print it with his name; but enjoined him not to communicate his intention to his Briſtol acquaintance. The gentleman, ſurpriſed at his reſolution, endeavoured to diſſuade him from publiſhing

publiſhing it, at leaſt from prefixing his name; and declared, that he could not reconcile the injunction of ſecreſy with his reſolution to own it at its firſt appearance. To this Mr. Savage returned an anſwer agreeable to his character in the following terms.

" I received yours this morning; and not
" without a little ſurprize at the contents.
" To anſwer a queſtion with a queſtion, you
" aſk me concerning London and Briſtol,
" Why will I add delineated? Why did Mr.
" Woolaſton add the ſame word to his RE-
" LIGION OF NATURE? I ſuppoſe that it
" was his will and pleaſure to add it in his
" caſe; and it is mine to do ſo in my own.
" You are pleaſed to tell me, that you un-
" derſtand not why ſecreſy is enjoined, and
" yet I intend to ſet my name to it. My
" anſwer is—I have my private reaſons,
" which I am not obliged to explain to any
" one. You doubt my friend Mr. S——
" would not approve of it—And what is it
" to me whether he does or not? Do you
" imagine that Mr. S—— is to dictate to
" me? If any man who calls himſelf my
" friend ſhould aſſume ſuch an air, I would
" ſpurn

" ſpurn at his friendſhip with contempt.
" You ſay, I ſeem to think ſo by not letting
" him know it—And ſuppoſe I do, what
" then? Perhaps I can give reaſons for that
" diſapprobation, very foreign from what
" you would imagine. You go on in ſaying,
" Suppoſe I ſhould not put my name to it—
" My anſwer is, that I will not ſuppoſe any
" ſuch thing, being determined to the con-
" trary: neither, Sir, would I have you
" ſuppoſe, that I applied to you for want of
" another preſs: nor would I have you ima-
" gine, that I owe Mr. S—— obligations
" which I do not."

Such was his imprudence, and ſuch his obſtinate adherence to his own reſolutions, however abſurd. A priſoner! ſupported by charity! and, whatever inſults he might have received during the latter part of his ſtay in Briſtol, once careſſed, eſteemed, and preſented with a liberal collection, he could forget on a ſudden his danger and his obligations, to gratify the petulance of his wit, or the eagerneſs of his reſentment, and publiſh a ſatire, by which he might reaſonably expect that he ſhould alienate thoſe who then ſupported

ported him, and provoke thoſe whom he could neither reſiſt nor eſcape.

This reſolution, from the execution of which it is probable that only his death could have hindered him, is ſufficient to ſhew, how much he diſregarded all conſiderations that oppoſed his preſent paſſions, and how readily he hazarded all future advantages for any immediate gratifications. Whatever was his predominant inclination, neither hope nor fear hindered him from complying with it; nor had oppoſition any other effect than to heighten his ardour, and irritate his vehemence.

This performance was however laid aſide, while he was employed in ſoliciting aſſiſtance from ſeveral great perſons; and one interruption ſucceeding another, hindered him from ſupplying the chaſm, and perhaps from retouching the other parts, which he can hardly be imagined to have finiſhed in his own opinion; for it is very unequal, and ſome of the lines are rather inſerted to rhyme to others, than to ſupport or improve the ſenſe; but the firſt and laſt parts are worked up with great ſpirit and elegance.

His

His time was ſpent in the priſon for the moſt part in ſtudy, or in receiving viſits; but ſometimes he deſcended to lower amuſements, and diverted himſelf in the kitchen with the converſation of the criminals; for it was not pleaſing to him to be much without company; and though he was very capable of a judicious choice, he was often contented with the firſt that offered: for this he was ſometimes reproved by his friends, who found him ſurrounded with felons; but the reproof was on that, as on other occaſions, thrown away; he continued to gratify himſelf, and to ſet very little value on the opinion of others.

But here, as in every other ſcene of his life, he made uſe of ſuch opportunities as occurred of benefiting thoſe who were more miſerable than himſelf, and was always ready to perform any office of humanity to his fellow-priſoners.

He had now ceaſed from correſponding with any of his ſubſcribers except one, who yet continued to remit him the twenty pounds a year which he had promiſed him, and by whom

whom it was expected that he would have been in a very ſhort time enlarged, becauſe he had directed the keeper to enquire after the ſtate of his debts.

However, he took care to enter his name according to the forms of the court, that the creditor might be obliged to make him ſome allowance, if he was continued a priſoner, and when on that occaſion he appeared in the hall was treated with very unuſual reſpect.

But the reſentment of the city was afterwards raiſed by ſome accounts that had been ſpread of the ſatire, and he was informed that ſome of the merchants intended to pay the allowance which the law required, and to detain him a priſoner at their own expence. This he treated as an empty menace; and perhaps might have haſtened the publication, only to ſhew how much he was ſuperior to their inſults, had not all his ſchemes been ſuddenly deſtroyed.

When he had been ſix months in priſon, he received from one of his friends*, in

* Mr. Pope.

whoſe

whoſe kindneſs he had the greateſt confidence, and on whoſe aſſiſtance he chiefly depended, a letter, that contained a charge of very atrocious ingratitude, drawn up in ſuch terms as ſudden reſentment dictated. Mr. Savage returned a very ſolemn proteſtation of his innocence, but however appeared much diſturbed at the accuſation. Some days afterwards he was ſeized with a pain in his back and ſide, which, as it was not violent, was not ſuſpected to be dangerous; but growing daily more languid and dejected, on the 25th of July he confined himſelf to his room, and a fever ſeized his ſpirits. The ſymptoms grew every day more formidable, but his condition did not enable him to procure any aſſiſtance. The laſt time that the keeper ſaw him was on July the 31ſt*; when Savage, ſeeing him at his bed-ſide, ſaid, with an uncommon earneſtneſs, "I have ſomething to "ſay to you, Sir;" but, after a pauſe, moved his hand in a melancholy manner; and, finding himſelf unable to recollect what he was going to communicate, ſaid, "'Tis "gone!" The keeper ſoon after left him;

* In 1743.

and the next morning he died. He was buried in the church-yard of St. Peter, at the expence of the keeper.

Such were the life and death of Richard Savage, a man equally diſtinguiſhed by his virtues and vices; and at once remarkable for his weakneſſes and abilities.

He was of a middle ſtature, of a thin habit of body, a long viſage, coarſe features, and melancholy aſpect; of a grave and manly deportment, a ſolemn dignity of mien; but which, upon a nearer acquaintance, ſoftened into an engaging eaſineſs of manners. His walk was ſlow, and his voice tremulous and mournful. He was eaſily excited to ſmiles, but very ſeldom provoked to laughter.

His mind was in an uncommon degree vigorous and active. His judgement was accurate, his apprehenſion quick, and his memory ſo tenacious, that he was frequently obſerved to know what he had learned from others in a ſhort time, better than thoſe by whom he was informed; and could frequently recollect incidents, with all their combi-

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nation of circumſtances, which few would have regarded at the preſent time, but which the quickneſs of his apprehenſion impreſſed upon him. He had the peculiar felicity, that his attention never deſerted him; he was preſent to every object, and regardful of the moſt trifling occurrences. He had the art of eſcaping from his own reflections, and accommodating himſelf to every new ſcene.

To this quality is to be imputed the extent of his knowledge, compared with the ſmall time which he ſpent in viſible endeavours to acquire it. He mingled in curſory converſation with the ſame ſteadineſs of attention as others apply to a lecture; and, amidſt the appearance of thoughtleſs gaiety, loſt no new idea that was ſtarted, nor any hint that could be improved. He had therefore made in coffee-houſes the ſame proficiency as in other ſtudies; and it is remarkable, that the writings of a man of little education and little reading have an air of learning ſcarcely to be found in any other performances, but which perhaps as often obſcures as embelliſhes them.

His judgement was eminently exact both with regard to writings and to men. The knowledge of life was indeed his chief attainment; and it is not without ſome ſatisfaction, that I can produce the ſuffrage of Savage in favour of human nature, of which he never appeared to entertain ſuch odious ideas as ſome, who perhaps had neither his judgement nor experience, have publiſhed, either in oſtentation of their ſagacity, vindication of their crimes, or gratification of their malice.

His method of life particularly qualified him for converſation, of which he knew how to practiſe all the graces. He was never vehement or loud, but at once modeſt and eaſy, open and reſpectful; his language was vivacious and elegant, and equally happy upon grave or humorous ſubjects. He was generally cenſured for not knowing when to retire; but that was not the defect of his judgement, but of his fortune; when he left his company, he was frequently to ſpend the remaining part of the night in the ſtreet, or at leaſt was abandoned to gloomy reflections, which

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it is not ſtrange that he delayed as long as he could; and ſometimes forgot that he gave others pain to avoid it himſelf.

It cannot be ſaid, that he made uſe of his abilities for the direction of his own conduct: an irregular and diſſipated manner of life had made him the ſlave of every paſſion that happened to be excited by the preſence of its object, and that ſlavery to his paſſions reciprocally produced a life irregular and diſſipated. He was not maſter of his own motions, nor could promiſe any thing for the next day.

With regard to his œconomy, nothing can be added to the relation of his life. He appeared to think himſelf born to be ſupported by others, and diſpenſed from all neceſſity of providing for himſelf; he therefore never proſecuted any ſcheme of advantage, nor endeavoured even to ſecure the profits which his writings might have afforded him. His temper was, in conſequence of the dominion of his paſſions, uncertain and capricious; he was eaſily engaged, and eaſily diſguſted; but he is

accuſed of retaining his hatred more tenaciouſly than his benevolence.

He was compaſſionate both by nature and principle, and always ready to perform offices of humanity; but when he was provoked (and very ſmall offences were ſufficient to provoke him), he would proſecute his revenge with the utmoſt acrimony till his paſſion had ſubſided.

His friendſhip was therefore of little value; for though he was zealous in the ſupport or vindication of thoſe whom he loved, yet it was always dangerous to truſt him, becauſe he conſidered himſelf as diſcharged by the firſt quarrel from all ties of honour or gratitude; and would betray thoſe ſecrets which, in the warmth of confidence, had been imparted to him. This practice drew upon him an univerſal accuſation of ingratitude: nor can it be denied that he was very ready to ſet himſelf free from the load of an obligation; for he could not bear to conceive himſelf in a ſtate of dependence, his pride being equally powerful with his other paſſions, and appearing in the form of inſolence

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at one time, and of vanity at another. Vanity, the moſt innocent ſpecies of pride, was moſt frequently predominant: He could not eaſily leave off, when he had once begun to mention himſelf or his works; nor ever read his verſes without ſtealing his eyes from the page, to diſcover, in the faces of his audience, how they were affected with any favourite paſſage.

A kinder name than that of vanity ought to be given to the delicacy with which he was always careful to ſeparate his own merit from every other man's, and to reject that praiſe to which he had no claim. He did not forget, in mentioning his performances, to mark every line that had been ſuggeſted or amended; and was ſo accurate, as to relate that he owed three words in *The Wanderer* to the advice of his friends.

His veracity was queſtioned, but with little reaſon; his accounts, though not indeed always the ſame, were generally conſiſtent. When he loved any man, he ſuppreſſed all his faults; and, when he had been offended by him, concealed all his virtues: but his

characters were generally true, ſo far as he proceeded; though it cannot be denied, that his partiality might have ſometimes the effect of falſehood.

In caſes indifferent, he was zealous for virtue, truth, and juſtice: he knew very well the neceſſity of goodneſs to the preſent and future happineſs of mankind; nor is there perhaps any writer, who has leſs endeavoured to pleaſe by flattering the appetites, or perverting the judgement.

As an author, therefore, and he now ceaſes to influence mankind in any other character, if one piece which he had reſolved to ſuppreſs be excepted, he has very little to fear from the ſtricteſt moral or religious cenſure. And though he may not be altogether ſecure againſt the objections of the critic, it muſt however be acknowledged, that his works are the productions of a genius truly poetical; and, what many writers who have been more laviſhly applauded cannot boaſt, that they have an original air, which has no reſemblance of any foregoing writer; that the verification and ſentiments have a caſt peculiar to themſelves,

ſelves, which no man can imitate with ſucceſs, becauſe what was nature in Savage, would in another be affectation. It muſt be confeſſed, that his deſcriptions are ſtriking, his images animated, his fictions juſtly imagined, and his allegories artfully purſued; that his diction is elevated, though ſometimes forced, and his numbers ſonorous and majeſtic, though frequently ſluggiſh and encumbered. Of his ſtyle, the general fault is harſhneſs, and its general excellence is dignity; of his ſentiments, the prevailing beauty is ſublimity, and uniformity the prevailing defect.

For his life, or for his writings, none, who candidly conſider his fortune, will think an apology either neceſſary or difficult. If he was not always ſufficiently inſtructed in his ſubject, his knowledge was at leaſt greater than could have been attained by others in the ſame ſtate. If his works were ſometimes unfiniſhed, accuracy cannot reaſonably be exacted from a man oppreſſed with want, which he has no hope of relieving but by a ſpeedy publication. The inſolence and reſentment of which he is accuſed were not eaſily to be avoided by a great mind, irritated by perpetual

tual hardſhips, and conſtrained hourly to return the ſpurns of contempt, and repreſs the inſolence of proſperity; and vanity may ſurely readily be pardoned in him, to whom life afforded no other comforts than barren praiſes, and the conſciouſneſs of deſerving them.

Thoſe are no proper judges of his conduct, who have ſlumbered away their time on the down of affluence; nor will any wiſe man preſume to ſay, "Had I been in Savage's "condition, I ſhould have lived or written "better than Savage."

This relation will not be wholly without its uſe, if thoſe, who languiſh under any part of his ſufferings, ſhall be enabled to fortify their patience, by reflecting that they feel only thoſe afflictions from which the abilities of Savage did not exempt him; or thoſe, who, in confidence of ſuperior capacities or attainments, diſregard the common maxims of life, ſhall be reminded, that nothing will ſupply the want of prudence; and that negligence and irregularity, long continued, will make knowledge uſeleſs, wit ridiculous, and genius contemptible.

# S W I F T.

# SWIFT.

AN Account of Dr. Swift has been already collected, with great diligence and acuteneſs, by Dr. Hawkeſworth, according to a ſcheme which I laid before him in the intimacy of our friendſhip. I cannot therefore be expected to ſay much of a life, concerning which I had long ſince communicated my thoughts to a man capable of dignifying his narration with ſo much elegance of language and force of ſentiment.

JONATHAN SWIFT was, according to an account ſaid to be written by himſelf, the ſon of Jonathan Swift, an attorney, and was born at Dublin on St. Andrew's day, 1667: according to his own report, as delivered by Pope to Spence, he was born at Leiceſter,

Leiceſter, the ſon of a clergyman, who was miniſter of a pariſh in Herefordſhire*. During his life the place of his birth was undetermined. He was contented to be called an Iriſhman by the Iriſh; but would occaſionally call himſelf an Engliſhman. The queſtion may, without much regret, be left in the obſcurity in which he delighted to involve it.

Whatever was his birth, his education was Iriſh. He was ſent at the age of ſix to the ſchool at Kilkenny, and in his fifteenth year (1682) was admitted into the Univerſity of Dublin.

In his academical ſtudies he was either not diligent or not happy. It muſt diſappoint every reader's expectation, that, when at the uſual time he claimed the Bachelorſhip of Arts, he was found by the examiners too conſpicuouſly deficient for regular admiſſion, and obtained his degree at laſt by *ſpecial favour*; a term uſed in that univerſity to denote want of merit.

* Spence's Anecdotes, vol. II. p. 273.

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Of this diſgrace it may be eaſily ſuppoſed that he was much aſhamed, and ſhame had its proper effect in producing reformation. He reſolved from that time to ſtudy eight hours a-day, and continued his induſtry for ſeven years, with what improvement is ſufficiently known. This part of his ſtory well deſerves to be remembered; it may afford uſeful admonition and powerful encouragement to many men, whoſe abilities have been made for a time uſeleſs by their paſſions or pleaſures, and who, having loſt one part of life in idleneſs, are tempted to throw away the remainder in deſpair.

In this courſe of daily application he continued three years longer at Dublin; and in this time, if the obſervation and memory of an old companion may be truſted, he drew the firſt ſketch of his *Tale of a Tub*.

When he was about one-and-twenty (1688), being by the death of Godwin Swift his uncle, who had ſupported him, left without ſubſiſtence, he went to conſult his mother, who then lived at Leiceſter, about the future courſe of his life, and by her direction ſolicit-

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ed the advice and patronage of Sir William Temple, who had married one of Mrs. Swift's relations, and whoſe father Sir John Temple, Maſter of the Rolls in Ireland, had lived in great familiarity of friendſhip with Godwin Swift, by whom Jonathan had been to that time maintained.

Temple received with ſufficient kindneſs the nephew of his father's friend, with whom he was, when they converſed together, ſo much pleaſed, that he detained him two years in his houſe. Here he became known to King William, who ſometimes viſited Temple when he was diſabled by the gout, and, being attended by Swift in the garden, ſhewed him how to cut aſparagus in the Dutch way.

King William's notions were all military; and he expreſſed his kindneſs to Swift by offering to make him a captain of horſe.

When Temple removed to Moor-park, he took Swift with him; and when he was conſulted by the Earl of Portland about the expedience of complying with a bill then de-

pending for making parliaments triennial, againſt which King William was ſtongly prejudiced, after having in vain tried to ſhew the Earl that the propoſal involved nothing dangerous to royal power, he ſent Swift for the ſame purpoſe to the King. Swift, who probably was proud of his employment, and went with all the confidence of a young man, found his arguments, and his art of diſplaying them, made totally ineffectual by the predetermination of the King; and uſed to mention this diſappointment as his firſt antidote againſt vanity.

Before he left Ireland he contracted a diſorder, as he thought, by eating too much fruit. The original of diſeaſes is commonly obſcure. Almoſt every boy eats as much fruit as he can get, without any great inconvenience. The diſeaſe of Swift was giddineſs with deafneſs, which attacked him from time to time, began very early, purſued him through life, and at laſt ſent him to the grave, deprived of reaſon.

Being much oppreſſed at Moor-park by this grievous malady, he was adviſed to try

his native air, and went to Ireland; but, finding no benefit, returned to Sir William, at whoſe houſe he continued his ſtudies, and is known to have read, among other books, *Cyprian* and *Irenæus*. He thought exerciſe of great neceſſity, and uſed to run half a mile up and down a hill every two hours.

It is eaſy to imagine that the mode in which his firſt degree was conferred left him no great fondneſs for the Univerſity of Dublin, and therefore he reſolved to become a Maſter of Arts at Oxford. In the teſtimonial which he produced, the words of diſgrace were omitted, and he took his Maſter's degree (July 5, 1692) with ſuch reception and regard as fully contented him.

While he lived with Temple, he uſed to pay his mother at Leiceſter an yearly viſit. He travelled on foot, unleſs ſome violence of weather drove him into a waggon, and at night he would go to a penny lodging, where he purchaſed clean ſheets for ſix-pence. This practice Lord Orrery imputes to his innate love of groſſneſs and vulgarity: ſome may aſcribe it to his deſire of ſurveying human life through

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all its varieties; and others, perhaps with equal probability, to a paſſion which ſeems to have been deep fixed in his heart, the love of a ſhilling.

In time he began to think that his attendance at Moor-park deſerved ſome other recompence than the pleaſure, however mingled with improvement, of Temple's converſation; and grew ſo impatient, that (1694) he went away in diſcontent.

Temple, conſcious of having given reaſon for complaint, is ſaid to have made him Deputy Maſter of the Rolls in Ireland; which, according to his kinſman's account, was an office which he knew him not able to diſcharge. Swift therefore reſolved to enter into the Church, in which he had at firſt no higher hopes than of the chaplainſhip to the Factory at Liſbon; but being recommended to Lord Capel, he obtained the prebend of *Kilroot* in *Connor*, of about a hundred pounds a year.

But the infirmities of Temple made a companion like Swift ſo neceſſary, that he invit-

ed him back, with a promiſe to procure him Engliſh preferment, in exchange for the prebend which he deſired him to reſign. With this requeſt Swift quickly complied, having perhaps equally repented their ſeparation, and they lived on together with mutual ſatisfaction; and, in the four years that paſſed between his return and Temple's death, it is probable that he wrote the *Tale of a Tub* and the *Battle of the Books*.

Swift began early to think, or to hope, that he was a poet, and wrote Pindarick Odes to Temple, to the King, and to the Athenian Society, a knot of obſcure men, who publiſhed a periodical pamphlet of anſwers to queſtions, ſent, or ſuppoſed to be ſent, by Letters. I have been told that Dryden, having peruſed theſe verſes, ſaid, "Couſin Swift, "you will never be a poet;" and that this denunciation was the motive of Swift's perpetual malevolence to Dryden.

In 1699 Temple died, and left a legacy with his manuſcripts to Swift, for whom he had obtained, from King William, a promiſe of the firſt prebend that ſhould be vacant at Weſtminſter or Canterbury.

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That this promiſe might not be forgotten, Swift dedicated to the King the poſthumous works with which he was intruſted, but neither the dedication, nor tenderneſs for the man whom he once had treated with confidence and fondneſs, revived in King William the remembrance of his promiſe. Swift awhile attended the Court; but ſoon found his ſolicitations hopeleſs.

He was then invited by the Earl of Berkley to accompany him into Ireland, as his private ſecretary; but after having done the buſineſs till their arrival at Dublin, he then found that one *Buſh* had perſuaded the Earl that a clergyman was not a proper ſecretary, and had obtained the office for himſelf. In a man like Swift, ſuch circumvention and inconſtancy muſt have excited violent indignation.

But he had yet more to ſuffer. Lord Berkley had the diſpoſal of the deanery of Derry, and Swift expected to obtain it; but by the ſecretary's influence, ſuppoſed to have been ſecured by a bribe, it was beſtowed on ſomebody elſe; and Swift was diſmiſſed with the livings of *Laracor*

and *Rathbeggin* in the dioceſe of Meath, which together did not equal half the value of the deanery.

At Laracor he increaſed the parochial duty by reading prayers on Wedneſdays and Fridays, and performed all the offices of his profeſſion with great decency and exactneſs.

Soon after his ſettlement at Laracor, he invited to Ireland the unfortunate Stella, a young woman whoſe name was Johnſon, the daughter of the ſteward of Sir William Temple, who, in conſideration of her father's virtues, left her a thouſand pounds. With her came Mrs. Dingley, whoſe whole fortune was twenty-ſeven pounds a year for her life. With theſe Ladies he paſſed his hours of relaxation, and to them he opened his boſom; but they never reſided in the ſame houſe, nor did he ſee either without a witneſs. They lived at the Parſonage, when Swift was away; and when he returned, removed to a lodging, or to the houſe of a neighbouring clergyman.

Swift

Swift was not one of thoſe minds which amaze the world with early pregnancy: his firſt work, except his few poetical Eſſays, was the *Diſſentions in Athens and Rome*, publiſhed (1701) in his thirty-fourth year. After its appearance, paying a viſit to ſome biſhop, he heard mention made of the new pamphlet that Burnet had written, replete with political knowledge. When he ſeemed to doubt Burnet's right to the work, he was told by the Biſhop, that he was *a young man;* and, ſtill perſiſting to doubt, that he was *a very poſitive young man.*

Three years afterward (1704) was publiſhed *The Tale of a Tub:* of this book charity may be perſuaded to think that it might be written by a man of a peculiar character, without ill intention, but it is certainly of dangerous example. That Swift was its author, though it be univerſally believed, was never owned by himſelf, nor very well proved by any evidence; but no other claimant can be produced, and he did not deny it when Archbiſhop Sharpe and the Ducheſs of Somerſet, by ſhewing it to the Queen, debarred him from a biſhoprick.

When this wild work firſt raiſed the attention of the publick, Sacheverell, meeting Smalridge, tried to flatter him, by ſeeming to think him the author; but Smalridge anſwered with indignation, "Not all that you "and I have in the world, nor all that ever "we ſhall have, ſhould hire me to write the "*Tale of a Tub.*"

The digreſſions relating to Wotton and Bentley muſt be confeſſed to diſcover want of knowledge, or want of integrity; he did not underſtand the two controverſies, or he willingly miſrepreſented them. But Wit can ſtand its ground againſt Truth only a little while. The honours due to learning have been juſtly diſtributed by the deciſion of poſterity.

*The Battle of the Books* is ſo like the *Combat des Livres*, which the ſame queſtion concerning the Ancients and Moderns had produced in France, that the improbability of ſuch a coincidence of thoughts without communication is not, in my opinion, balanced by the anonymous proteſtation prefixed, in which all knowledge of the French book is peremptorily diſowned.

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For ſome time after Swift was probably employed in ſolitary ſtudy, gaining the qualifications requiſite for future eminence. How often he viſited England, and with what diligence he attended his pariſhes, I know not. It was not till about four years afterwards that he became a profeſſed author, and then one year (1708) produced *The Sentiments of a Church-of-England Man;* the ridicule of Aſtrology, under the name of *Bickerſtaff;* the *Argument againſt aboliſhing Chriſtianity;* and the defence of the *Sacramental Teſt.*

*The Sentiments of a Church-of-England Man* is written with great coolneſs, moderation, eaſe, and perſpicuity. The *Argument againſt aboliſhing Chriſtianity* is a very happy and judicious irony. One paſſage in it deſerves to be ſelected.

"If Chriſtianity were once aboliſhed, how "could the free-thinkers, the ſtrong reaſon- "ers, and the men of profound learning, be "able to find another ſubject ſo calculated, "in all points, whereon to diſplay their abi- "lities? What wonderful productions of wit "ſhould we be deprived of from thoſe, whoſe "genius,

" genius, by continual practice, hath been " wholly turned upon raillery and invectives " againſt religion, and would therefore never " be able to ſhine, or diſtinguiſh themſelves, " upon any other ſubject? We are daily " complaining of the great decline of wit " among us, and would take away the great- " eſt, perhaps the only, topick we have left. " Who would ever have ſuſpected Aſgill for " a wit, or Toland for a philoſopher, if the " inexhauſtible ſtock of Chriſtianity had not " been at hand to provide them with mate- " rials? What other ſubject, through all art " or nature, could have produced Tindal for " a profound author, or furniſhed him with " readers? It is the wiſe choice of the ſub- " ject that alone adorns and diſtinguiſhes the " writer. For had an hundred ſuch pens as " theſe been employed on the ſide of reli- " gion, they would have immediately ſunk " into ſilence and oblivion."

The reaſonableneſs of a *Teſt* is not hard to be proved; but perhaps it muſt be allowed that the proper teſt has not been choſen.

The attention paid to the papers publiſhed under the name of *Bickerſtaff*, induced Steele,

when he projected the *Tatler*, to aſſume an appellation which had already gained poſſeſſion of the reader's notice.

In the year following he wrote a *Project for the Advancement of Religion*, addreſſed to Lady Berkley; by whoſe kindneſs it is not unlikely that he was advanced to his benefices. To this project, which is formed with great purity of intention, and diſplayed with ſpritelineſs and elegance, it can only be objected, that, like many projects, it is, if not generally impracticable, yet evidently hopeleſs, as it ſuppoſes more zeal, concord, and perſeverance, than a view of mankind gives reaſon for expecting.

He wrote likewiſe this year a *Vindication of Bickerſtaff*; and an explanation of an *Ancient Prophecy*, which, though not completed in all its parts, cannot be read without amazement.

Soon after began the buſy and important part of Swift's life. He was employed (1710) by the Primate of Ireland to ſolicit the Queen for a remiſſion of the Firſt Fruits and Twentieth parts to the Iriſh Clergy. With this purpoſe

purpoſe he had recourſe to Mr. Harley, to whom he was mentioned as a man neglected and oppreſſed by the laſt miniſtry, becauſe he had refuſed to co-operate with ſome of their ſchemes. What he had refuſed, has never been told; what he had ſuffered was, I ſuppoſe, the excluſion from a biſhoprick by the remonſtrances of Sharpe, whom he deſcribes as *the harmleſs tool of others hate*, and whom he repreſents as afterwards *ſuing for pardon.*

Harley's deſigns and ſituation were ſuch as made him glad of an auxiliary ſo well qualified for his ſervice; he therefore ſoon admitted him to familiarity, whether ever to confidence ſome have made a doubt; but it would have been difficult to excite his zeal without perſuading him that he was truſted, and not very eaſy to delude him by falſe perſuaſions.

He was certainly admitted to thoſe meetings in which the firſt hints and original plan of action are ſuppoſed to have been formed; and was one of the ſixteen Miniſters, or agents of the Miniſtry, who met weekly at each

each other's houſes, and were united by the name of *Brother*.

Being not immediately conſidered as an obdurate Tory, he converſed indiſcriminately with all the wits, and was yet the friend of Steele; who, in the *Tatler*, which began in 1710, confeſſes the advantages of his converſation, and mentions ſomething contributed by him to his paper. But he was now immerging into political controverſy; for the ſame year produced the *Examiner*, of which Swift wrote thirty-three papers. In argument he may be allowed to have the advantage; for where a wide ſyſtem of conduct, and the whole of a publick character, is laid open to enquiry, the accuſer having the choice of facts, muſt be very unſkilful if he does not prevail; but with regard to wit, I am afraid none of Swift's papers will be found equal to thoſe by which Addiſon oppoſed him.

Early in the next year he publiſhed a *Propoſal for correcting, improving, and aſcertaining the Engliſh Tongue*, in a Letter to the Earl of Oxford; written without much know-

knowledge of the general nature of language, and, without any accurate enquiry into the hiſtory of other tongues. The certainty and ſtability which, contrary to all experience, he thinks attainable, he propoſes to ſecure by inſtituting an academy; the decrees of which every man would have been willing, and many would have been proud to diſobey, and which, being renewed by ſucceſſive elections, would in a ſhort time have differed from itſelf.

He wrote the ſame year a *Letter to the October Club*, a number of Tory Gentlemen ſent from the country to Parliament, who formed themſelves into a club, to the number of about a hundred, and met to animate the zeal and raiſe the expectations of each other. They thought, with great reaſon, that the Miniſters were loſing opportunities; that ſufficient uſe was not made of the general ardour of the nation; they called loudly for more changes, and ſtronger efforts; and demanded the puniſhment of part, and the diſmiſſion of the reſt, of thoſe whom they conſidered as [redacted].

Their

Their eagerneſs was not gratified by the Queen, or by Harley. The Queen was probably ſlow becauſe ſhe was afraid, and Harley was ſlow becauſe he was doubtful; he was a tory only by neceſſity, or for convenience; and when he had power in his hands, had no ſettled purpoſe for which he ſhould employ it; forced to gratify to a certain degree the Tories who ſupported him, but unwilling to make his reconcilement to the Whigs utterly deſperate, he correſponded at once with the two expectants of the Crown, and kept, as has been obſerved, the ſucceſſion undetermined. Not knowing what to do, he did nothing; and with the fate of a double-dealer, at laſt he loſt his power, but kept his enemies.

Swift ſeems to have concurred in opinion with the *October Club*; but it was not in his power to quicken the tardineſs of Harley, whom he ſtimulated as much as he could, but with little effect. He that knows not whither to go, is in no haſte to move. Harley, who was perhaps not quick by nature, became yet more ſlow by irreſolution; and was content to hear that dilatorineſs lamented as natural,

tural, which he applauded in himſelf as politick.

Without the Tories, however, nothing could be done; and as they were not to be gratified, they muſt be appeaſed; and the conduct of the Miniſter, if it could not be vindicated, was to be plauſibly excuſed.

Swift now attained the zenith of his political importance: he publiſhed (1712) the *Conduct of the Allies*, ten days before the Parliament aſſembled. The purpoſe was to perſuade the nation to a peace, and never had any writer more ſucceſs. The people, who had been amuſed with bonfires and triumphal proceſſions, and looked with idolatry on the General and his friends, who, as they thought, had made England the arbitreſs of nations, were confounded between ſhame and rage, when they found that *mines had been exhauſted, and millions deſtroyed*, to ſecure the Dutch or aggrandize the emperor, without any advantage to ourſelves; that we had been bribing our neighbours to fight their own quarrel; and that amongſt our enemies we might number our allies.

That

That is now no longer doubted, of which the nation was then firſt informed, that the war was unneceſſarily protracted to fill the pockets of Marlborough; and that it would have been continued without end, if he could have continued his annual plunder. But Swift, I ſuppoſe, did not yet know what he has ſince written, that a commiſſion was drawn which would have appointed him General for life, had it not become ineffectual by the reſolution of Lord Cowper, who refuſed the ſeal.

*Whatever is received*, ſay the ſchools, *is received in proportion to the recipient.* The power of a political treatiſe depends much upon the diſpoſition of the people; the nation was then combuſtible, and a ſpark ſet it on fire. It is boaſted, that between November and January eleven thouſand were ſold; a great number at that time, when we were not yet a nation of readers. To its propagation certainly no agency of power or influence was wanting. It furniſhed arguments for converſation, ſpeeches for debate, and materials for parliamentary reſolutions.

Yet, ſurely, whoever ſurveys this wonder-working pamphlet with cool peruſal, will confeſs that its efficacy was ſupplied by the paſſions of its readers; that it operates by the mere weight of facts, with very little aſſiſtance from the hand that produced them.

This year (1712) he publiſhed his *Reflections on the Barrier Treaty*, which carries on the deſign of his *Conduct of the Allies*, and ſhews how little regard in that negotiation had been ſhewn to the intereſt of England, and how much of the conquered country had been demanded by the Dutch.

This was followed by *Remarks on the Biſhop of Sarum's Introduction to his third Volume of the Hiſtory of the Reformation*; a pamphlet which Burnet publiſhed as an alarm, to warn the nation of the approach of Popery. Swift, who ſeems to have diſliked the Biſhop with ſomething more than political averſion, treats him like one whom he is glad of an opportunity to inſult.

Swift, being now the declared favourite and ſuppoſed confidant of the Tory Miniſtry, was

was treated by all that depended on the Court with the reſpect which dependents know how to pay. He ſoon began to feel part of the miſery of greatneſs; he that could ſay he knew him, conſidered himſelf as having fortune in his power. Commiſſions, ſolicitations, remonſtrances, crowded about him; he was expected to do every man's buſineſs, to procure employment for one, and to retain it for another. In aſſiſting thoſe who addreſſed him, he repreſents himſelf as ſufficiently diligent; and deſires to have others believe, what he probably believed himſelf, that by his interpoſition many Whigs of merit, and among them Addiſon and Congreve, were continued in their places. But every man of known influence has ſo many petitions which he cannot grant, that he muſt neceſſarily offend more than he gratifies, as the preference given to one affords all the reſt a reaſon for complaint. *When I give away a place*, ſaid Lewis XIV. *I make an hundred diſcontented, and one ungrateful.*

Much has been ſaid of the equality and independence which he preſerved in his converſation with the Miniſters, of the frankneſs

of his remonſtrances, and the familiarity of his friendſhip. In accounts of this kind a few ſingle incidents are ſet againſt the general tenour of behaviour. No man, however, can pay a more ſervile tribute to the Great, than by ſuffering his liberty in their preſence to aggrandize him in his own eſteem. Between different ranks of the community there is neceſſarily ſome diſtance: he who is called by his ſuperior to paſs the interval, may very properly accept the invitation; but petulance and obtruſion are rarely produced by magnanimity; nor have often any nobler cauſe than the pride of importance, and the malice of inferiority. He who knows himſelf neceſſary may ſet, while that neceſſity laſts, a high value upon himſelf; as, in a lower condition, a ſervant eminently ſkilful may be ſaucy; but he is ſaucy only becauſe he is ſerviſe. Swift appears to have preſerved the kindneſs of thoſe that wanted him no longer; and therefore it muſt be allowed, that the childiſh freedom, to which he ſeems enough inclined, was overpowered by his better qualities.

His diſintereſtedneſs has been likewiſe mentioned; as a ſtrain of heroiſm, which would have

have been in his condition romantick and ſuperfluous. Eccleſiaſtical benefices, when they become vacant, muſt be given away; and the friends of Power may, if there be no inherent diſqualification, reaſonably expect them. Swift accepted (1713) the deanery of St. Patrick, the beſt preferment that his friends could venture to give him. That Miniſtry was in a great degree ſupported by the Clergy, who were not yet reconciled to the author of the *Tale of a Tub*, and would not without much diſcontent and indignation have borne to ſee him inſtalled in an Engliſh Cathedral.

He refuſed, indeed, fifty pounds from Lord Oxford; but he accepted afterwards a draught of a thouſand upon the Exchequer, which was intercepted by the Queen's death, and which he reſigned, as he ſays himſelf, *multa gemens*, *with many a groan*.

In the midſt of his power and his politicks, he kept a journal of his viſits, his walks, his interviews with Miniſters, and quarrels with his ſervant, and tranſmitted it to Mrs. Johnſon and Mrs. Dingley, to whom he knew

that whatever befel him was intereſting, and to whom no accounts could be too minute. Whether theſe diurnal trifles were properly expoſed to eyes which had never received any pleaſure from the preſence of the Dean, may be reaſonably doubted: they have, however, ſome odd attraction; the reader, finding frequent mention of names which he has been uſed to conſider as important, goes on in hope of information; and, as there is nothing to fatigue attention, if he is diſappointed he can hardly complain. It is eaſy to perceive, from every page, that though ambition preſſed Swift into a life of buſtle, the wiſh was always returning for a life of eaſe.

He went to take poſſeſſion of his deanery, as ſoon as he had obtained it; but he was not ſuffered to ſtay in Ireland more than a fortnight before he was recalled to England, that he might reconcile Lord Oxford and Lord Bolingbroke, who began to look on one another with malevolence, which every day increaſed, and which Bolingbroke appeared to retain in his laſt years.

Swift

Swift contrived an interview, from which they both departed diſcontented: he procured a ſecond, which only convinced him that the feud was irreconcilable; he told them his opinion, that all was loſt. This denunciation was contradicted by Oxford, but Bolingbroke whiſpered that he was right.

Before this violent diſſenſion had ſhattered the Miniſtry, Swift had publiſhed, in the beginning of the year (1714), *The publick Spirit of the Whigs*, in anſwer to *The Criſis*, a pamphlet for which *Steele* was expelled from the Houſe of Commons. Swift was now ſo far alienated from *Steele* as to think him no longer entitled to decency, and therefore treats him ſometimes with contempt, and ſometimes with abhorrence.

In this pamphlet the Scotch were mentioned in terms ſo provoking to that irritable nation, that, reſolving *not to be offended with impunity*, the Scotch Lords in a body demanded an audience of the Queen, and ſolicited reparation. A proclamation was iſſued, in which three hundred pounds was offered for diſcovery of the author. From this ſtorm he

he was, as he relates, *ſecured by a ſleight*; of what kind, or by whoſe prudence, is not known; and ſuch was the increaſe of his reputation, that the Scottiſh *Nation applied again that he would be their friend.*

He was become ſo formidable to the Whigs, that his familiarity with the Miniſters was clamoured at in Parliament, particularly by two men, afterwards of great note, *Aiſlabie* and *Walpole.*

But, by the diſunion of his great friends, his importance and his deſigns were now at an end; and ſeeing his ſervices at laſt uſeleſs, he retired about June (1714) into Berkſhire, where, in the houſe of a friend, he wrote what was then ſuppreſſed, but has ſince appeared under the title of *Free Thoughts on the preſent State of Affairs.*

While he was waiting in this retirement for events which time or chance might bring to paſs, the death of the Queen broke down at once the whole ſyſtem of Tory Politicks; and nothing remained but to withdraw from the

the implacability of triumphant Whiggiſm, and ſhelter himſelf in unenvied obſcurity.

The accounts of his reception in Ireland, given by Lord Orrery and Dr. Delany, are ſo different, that the credit of the writers, both undoubtedly veracious, cannot be ſaved but by ſuppoſing, what I think is true, that they ſpeak of different times. When Delany ſays that he was received with kindneſs and reſpect, he means for the firſt fortnight, when he came to take legal poſſeſſion; and when Lord Orrery tells that he was pelted by the populace, he is to be underſtood of the time when, after the Queen's death, he became a ſettled reſident.

The Archbiſhop of Dublin gave him at firſt ſome diſturbance in the exerciſe of his juriſdiction; but it was ſoon diſcovered, that between prudence and integrity he was ſeldom in the wrong; and that, when he was right, his ſpirit did not eaſily yield to oppoſition.

Having ſo lately quitted the tumults of a party and the intrigues of a court, they ſtill

kept

kept his thoughts in agitation, as the ſea fluctuates a while when the ſtorm has ceaſed. He therefore filled his hours with ſome hiſtorical attempts, relating to the *Change of the Miniſters* and *the Conduct of the Miniſtry*. He likewiſe is ſaid to have written a *Hiſtory of the Four laſt Years of Queen Anne*, which he began in her lifetime, and afterwards laboured with great attention, but never publiſhed. It was after his death in the hands of Lord Orrery and Dr. King. A book under that title was publiſhed, with Swift's name, by Dr. Lucas; of which I can only ſay, that it ſeemed by no means to correſpond with the notions that I had formed of it, from a converſation which I once heard between the Earl of Orrery and old Mr. Lewis.

Swift now, much againſt his will, commenced Iriſhman for life, and was to contrive how he might be beſt accommodated in a country where he conſidered himſelf as in a ſtate of exile. It ſeems that his firſt recourſe was to piety. The thoughts of death ruſhed upon him, at this time, with ſuch inceſſant importunity, that they took poſſeſſion of

of his mind when he firſt waked for many years together.

He opened his houſe by a publick table two days a week, and found his entertainments gradually frequented by more and more viſitants of learning among the men, and of elegance among the women. Mrs. Johnſon had left the country, and lived in lodgings not far from the deanery. On his publick days ſhe regulated the table, but always appeared at it as a mere gueſt, like other Ladies.

On other days he often dined, at a ſtated price, with Mr. Worral, a clergyman of his cathedral, whoſe houſe was recommended by the peculiar neatneſs and pleaſantry of his wife. To this frugal mode of living, he was firſt diſpoſed by care to pay ſome debts which he had contracted, and he continued it for the pleaſure of accumulating money. His avarice, however, was not ſuffered to obſtruct the claims of his dignity; he was ſerved in plate, and uſed to ſay that he was the pooreſt gentleman in Ireland that eat upon

on plate, and the richeſt that lived without a coach.

How he ſpent the reſt of his time, and how he employed his hours of ſtudy, has been enquired with hopeleſs curioſity. For who can give an account of another's ſtudies? Swift was not likely to admit any to his privacies, or to impart a minute account of his buſineſs or his leiſure.

"Soon after (1716), in his forty-ninth year, he was privately married to Mrs. Johnſon by Dr. Aſhe, Biſhop of Clogher, as Dr. Madden told me, in the garden. The marriage made no change in their mode of life; they lived in different houſes, as before; nor did ſhe ever lodge in the deanery but when Swift was ſeized with a fit of giddineſs. "It "would be difficult," ſays Lord Orrery, "to "prove that they were ever afterwards toge- "ther without a third perſon."

The Dean of St. Patrick's lived in a private manner, known and regarded only by his friends, till, about the year 1720, he, by a pam-

a pamphlet, recommended to the Iriſh the uſe, and conſequently the improvement, of their manufacture. For a man to uſe the productions of his own labour is ſurely a natural right, and to like beſt what he makes himſelf is a natural paſſion. But to excite this paſſion, and enforce this right, appeared ſo criminal to thoſe who had an intereſt in the Engliſh trade, that the printer was impriſoned; and, as Hawkeſworth juſtly obſerves, the attention of the publick being by this outrageous reſentment turned upon the propoſal, the author was by conſequence made popular.

In 1723 died Mrs. Van Homrigh, a woman made unhappy by her admiration of wit, and ignominiouſly diſtinguiſhed by the name of *Vaneſſa*, whoſe conduct has been already ſufficiently diſcuſſed, and whoſe hiſtory is too well known to be minutely repeated. She was a young woman fond of literature, whom *Decanus* the *Dean*, called *Cadenus* by tranſpoſition of the letters, took pleaſure in directing and inſtructing; till, from being proud of his praiſe, ſhe grew fond of his perſon. Swift was then about forty-ſeven, at an age when vanity is ſtrongly excited by

the amorous attention of a young woman. If it be ſaid that Swift ſhould have checked a paſſion which he never meant to gratify, recourſe muſt be had to that extenuation which he ſo much deſpiſed, *men are but men*: perhaps however he did not at firſt know his own mind, and, as he repreſents himſelf, was undetermined. For his admiſſion of her courtſhip, and his indulgence of her hopes after his marriage to Stella, no other honeſt plea can be found, than that he delayed a diſagreeable diſcovery from time to time, dreading the immediate burſts of diſtreſs, and watching for a favourable moment. She thought herſelf neglected, and died of diſappointment; having ordered by her will the poem to be publiſhed, in which *Cadenus* had proclaimed her excellence, and confeſſed his love. The effect of the publication is thus related by Delany.

" I have good reaſon to believe, that they " both were greatly ſhocked and diſtreſſed " (though it may be differently) upon this " occaſion. The Dean made a tour to the " South of Ireland, for about two months, " at this time, to diſſipate his thoughts, and

" give

"give place to obloquy. And Stella retired
" (upon the earneſt invitation of the owner)
" to the houſe of a cheerful, generous, good-
" natured friend of the Dean's, whom ſhe
" alſo much loved and honoured. There my
" informer often ſaw her; and, I have rea-
" ſon to believe, uſed his utmoſt endeavours
" to relieve, ſupport, and amuſe her, in this
" ſad ſituation.

" One little incident he told me of, on
" that occaſion, I think I ſhall never forget.
" As her friend was an hoſpitable, open-
" hearted man, well-beloved, and largely
" acquainted, it happened one day that ſome
" gentlemen dropt in to dinner, who were
" ſtrangers to Stella's ſituation; and as the
" poem of *Cadenus and Vaneſſa* was then the
" general topic of converſation, one of them
" ſaid, 'Surely that Vaneſſa muſt be an ex-
" traordinary woman, that could inſpire the
" Dean to write ſo finely upon her.' Mrs.
" Johnſon ſmiled, and anſwered, " that ſhe
" thought that point not quite ſo clear; for
" it was well known the Dean could write
" finely upon a broomſtick."

The

The great acquiſition of eſteem and influence was made by the *Drapier's Letters* in 1724. One Wood of Wolverhampton in Staffordſhire, a man enterpriſing and rapacious, had, as is ſaid, by a preſent to the Ducheſs of Munſter, obtained a patent empowering him to coin one hundred and eighty thouſand pounds of half-pence and farthings for the kingdom of Ireland, in which there was a very inconvenient and embarraſſing ſcarcity of copper coin; ſo that it was poſſible to run in debt upon the credit of a piece of money. The cook or keeper of an alehouſe could not refuſe to ſupply a man that had ſilver in his hand, and the buyer would not leave his money without change.

The project was therefore plauſible. The ſcarcity, which was already great, Wood took care to make greater, by agents who gathered up the old half-pence; and was about to turn his braſs into gold, by pouring the treaſures of his new mint upon Ireland, when Swift, finding that the metal was debaſed to an enormous degree, wrote Letters, under the name of *M. B. Drapier*, to ſhew the folly of receiving, and the miſchief that muſt enſue, by giving gold

gold and ſilver for coin worth perhaps not a third part of its nominal value.

The nation was alarmed; the new coin was univerſally refuſed: but the governors of Ireland conſidered reſiſtance to the King's patent as highly criminal; and one Whitſhed, then Chief Juſtice, who had tried the printer of the former pamphlet, and ſent out the Jury nine times, till by clamour and menaces they were frighted into a ſpecial verdict, now preſented the *Drapier*, but could not prevail on the Grand Jury to find the bill.

Lord Carteret and the Privy Council publiſhed a proclamation, offering three hundred pounds for diſcovering the author of the Fourth Letter. Swift had concealed himſelf from his printers, and truſted only his butler, who tranſcribed the paper. The man, immediately after the appearance of the proclamation, ſtrolled from the houſe, and ſtaid out all night, and part of the next day. There was reaſon enough to fear that he had betrayed his maſter for the reward; but he came home, and the Dean ordered him to put off his livery, and leave the houſe; "for," ſays he, "I know that my

" life is in your power, and I will not bear, " out of fear, either your inſolence or negli- " gence." The man excuſed his fault with great ſubmiſſion, and begged that he might be confined in the houſe while it was in his power to endanger his maſter; but the Dean reſolutely turned him out, without taking farther notice of him, till the term of information had expired, and then received him again. Soon afterwards he ordered him and the reſt of the ſervants into his preſence, without telling his intentions, and bade them take notice that their fellow-ſervant was no longer Robert the butler; but that his integrity had made him Mr. Blakeney, verger of St. Patrick's; an officer whoſe income was between thirty and forty pounds a year, but he ſtill continued for ſome years to ſerve his old maſter as his butler.

Swift was known from this time by the appellation of *The Dean*. He was honoured by the populace, as the champion, patron, and inſtructor of Ireland; and gained ſuch power as, conſidered both in its extent and duration, ſcarcely any man has ever enjoyed without greater wealth or higher ſtation.

He

He was from this important year the oracle of the traders, and the idol of the rabble, and by conſequence was feared and courted by all to whom the kindneſs of the traders or the populace was neceſſary. The *Drapier* was a ſign; the *Drapier* was a health; and which way ſoever the eye or the ear was turned, ſome tokens were found of the nation's gratitude to the *Drapier*.

The benefit was indeed great; he had reſcued Ireland from a very oppreſſive and predatory invaſion; and the popularity which he had gained he was diligent to keep, by appearing forward and zealous on every occaſion where the publick intereſt was ſuppoſed to be involved. Nor did he much ſcruple to boaſt his influence; for when, upon ſome attempts to regulate the coin, Archbiſhop Boulter, then one of the Juſtices, accuſed him of exaſperating the people, he exculpated himſelf by ſaying, "If I had lifted up my finger, "they would have torn you to pieces."

But the pleaſure of popularity was ſoon interrupted by domeſtic miſery. Mrs. Johnſon, whoſe converſation was to him the great

ſoftener of the ills of life, began in the year of the Drapier's triumph to decline; and two years afterwards was ſo waſted with ſickneſs, that her recovery was conſidered as hopeleſs.

Swift was then in England, and had been invited by Lord Bolingbroke to paſs the winter with him in France; but this call of calamity haſtened him to Ireland, where perhaps his preſence contributed to reſtore her to imperfect and tottering health.

He was now ſo much at eaſe, that (1727) he returned to England; where he collected three volumes of Miſcellanies in conjunction with Pope, who prefixed a querulous and apologetical Preface.

This important year ſent likewiſe into the world *Gulliver's Travels*, a production ſo new and ſtrange, that it filled the reader with a mingled emotion of merriment and amazement. It was received with ſuch avidity, that the price of the firſt edition was raiſed before the ſecond could be made; it was read by the high and the low, the learned and illiterate.

terate. Criticiſm was for a while loſt in wonder; no rules of judgement were applied to a book written in open defiance of truth and regularity. But when diſtinctions came to be made, the part which gave leaſt pleaſure was that which deſcribes the *Flying Iſland*, and that which gave moſt diſguſt muſt be the hiſtory of the *Houyhnhnms*.

While Swift was enjoying the reputation of his new work, the news of the king's death arrived; and he kiſſed the hands of the new King and Queen three days after their acceſſion.

By the Queen, when ſhe was Princeſs, he had been treated with ſome diſtinction, and was well received by her in her exaltation; but whether ſhe gave hopes which ſhe never took care to ſatisfy, or he formed expectations which ſhe never meant to raiſe, the event was, that he always afterwards thought on her with malevolence, and particularly charged her with breaking her promiſe of ſome medals which ſhe engaged to ſend him.

I know not whether ſhe had not, in her turn, ſome reaſon for complaint. A Letter was ſent her, not ſo much entreating as requiring her patronage of Mrs. Barber, an ingenious Iriſhwoman, who was then begging ſubſcriptions for her Poems. To this Letter was ſubſcribed the name of *Swift*, and it has all the appearances of his diction and ſentiments; but it was not written in his hand, and had ſome little improprieties. When he was charged with this Letter, he laid hold of the inaccuracies, and urged the improbability of the accuſation; but never denied it: he ſhuffles between cowardice and veracity, and talks big when he ſays nothing.

He ſeemed deſirous enough of recommencing courtier, and endeavoured to gain the kindneſs of Mrs. Howard, remembering what Mrs. Maſham had performed in former times; but his flatteries were, like thoſe of the other wits, unſucceſsful; the Lady either wanted power, or had no ambition of poetical immortality.

He was ſeized not long afterwards by a fit of giddineſs, and again heard of the ſickneſs and

and danger of Mrs. Johnſon. He then left the houſe of Pope, as it ſeems, with very little ceremony, finding that *two ſick friends cannot live together*; and did not write to him till he found himſelf at Cheſter.

He returned to a home of ſorrow: poor Stella was ſinking into the grave, and, after a languiſhing delay of about two months, died in her forty-fourth year, on January 28, 1728. How much he wiſhed her life, his papers tell us; nor can it be doubted that he dreaded the death of her whom he loved moſt, aggravated by the conſciouſneſs that himſelf had haſtened it.

Beauty and the power of pleaſing, the greateſt external advantages that woman can deſire or poſſeſs, were fatal to the unfortunate Stella. The man whom ſhe had the misfortune to love was, as Delany obſerves, fond of ſingularity, and deſirous to make a mode of happineſs for himſelf, out of the general courſe of things and order of Providence. From the time of her arrival in Ireland he ſeems reſolved to keep her in his power, and therefore hindered a match ſufficiently advan-

tageous, by accumulating unreaſonable demands, and preſcribing conditions that could not be performed. While ſhe was at her own diſpoſal he did not conſider his poſſeſſion as ſecure; reſentment, ambition, or caprice, might ſeparate them; he was therefore reſolved to make *aſſurance double ſure*, and to appropriate her by a private marriage, to which he had annexed the expectation of all the pleaſures of perfect friendſhip, without the uneaſineſs of conjugal reſtraint. But with this ſtate poor Stella was not ſatisfied; ſhe never was treated as a wife, and to the world ſhe had the appearance of a miſtreſs. She lived ſullenly on, in hope that in time he would own and receive her; but the time did not come till the change of his manners and depravation of his mind made her tell him, when he offered to acknowledge her, that *it was too late.* She then gave up herſelf to ſorrowful reſentment, and died by the tyranny of him, by whom ſhe was in the higheſt degree loved and honoured.

What were her claims to this excentrick tenderneſs, by which the laws of Nature were violated to retain her, curioſity will enquire; but

but how ſhall it be gratified? Swift was a lover; his teſtimony may be ſuſpected. Delany and the Iriſh ſaw with Swift's eyes, and therefore add little confirmation. That ſhe was virtuous, beautiful, and elegant, in a very high degree, ſuch admiration from ſuch a lover makes it very probable; but ſhe had not much literature, for ſhe could not ſpell her own language; and of her wit, ſo loudly vaunted, the ſmart ſayings which Swift has collected afford no ſplendid ſpecimen.

The reader of Swift's *Letter to a Lady on her Marriage*, may be allowed to doubt whether his opinion of female excellence ought implicitly to be admitted; for if his general thoughts on women were ſuch as he exhibits, a very little ſenſe in a Lady would enrapture, and a very little virtue would aſtoniſh him. Stella's ſupremacy, therefore, was perhaps only local; ſhe was great, becauſe her aſſociates were little.

In ſome Remarks lately publiſhed on the Life of Swift, this marriage is mentioned as fabulous, or doubtful; but, alas! poor Stella,

as

as Dr. Madden told me, related her melancholy ſtory to Dr. Sheridan, when he attended her as a clergyman to prepare her for death; and Delany tells it not with doubt, but only with regret. Swift never mentioned her without a ſigh.

The reſt of his life was ſpent in Ireland, in a country to which not even power almoſt deſpotick, nor flattery almoſt idolatrous, could reconcile him. He ſometimes wiſhed to viſit England, but always found ſome reaſon of delay. He tells Pope, in the decline of life, that he hopes once more to ſee him; *but if not*, ſays he, *we muſt part, as all human beings have parted.*

After the death of Stella, his benevolence was contracted, and his ſeverity exaſperated; he drove his acquaintance from his table, and wondered why he was deſerted. But he continued his attention to the publick, and wrote from time to time ſuch directions, admonitions, or cenſures, as the various exigency of affairs, in his opinion, made proper; and nothing fell from his pen in vain.

In

In a ſhort poem on the Preſbyterians, whom he always regarded with deteſtation, he beſtowed one ſtricture upon Betteſworth, a lawyer eminent for his inſolence to the clergy, which, from very conſiderable reputation, brought him into immediate and univerſal contempt. Betteſworth, enraged at his diſgrace and loſs, went to Swift, and demanded whether he was the author of that poem. "Mr. Betteſworth," anſwered he, "I was in my youth acquainted with great "lawyers, who, knowing my diſpoſition to "ſatire, adviſed me, that, if any ſcoundrel "or blockhead whom I had lampooned "ſhould aſk, *Are you the author of this paper*, "I ſhould tell him that I was not the author; "and therefore I tell you, Mr. Betteſworth, "that I am not the author of theſe lines."

Betteſworth was ſo little ſatisfied with this account, that he publickly profeſſed his reſolution of a violent and corporal revenge; but the inhabitants of St. Patrick's diſtrict embodied themſelves in the Dean's defence; and Betteſworth declared in Parliament, that Swift had deprived him of twelve hundred pounds a year.

Swift

Swift was popular a while by another mode of beneficence. He ſet aſide ſome hundreds to be lent in ſmall ſums to the poor, from five ſhillings, I think, to five pounds. He took no intereſt, and only required that, at repayment, a ſmall fee ſhould be given to the accomptant; but he required that the day of promiſed payment ſhould be exactly kept. A ſevere and punctilious temper is ill qualified for tranſactions with the poor; the day was often broken, and the loan was not repaid. This might have been eaſily foreſeen; but for this Swift had made no proviſion of patience or pity. He ordered his debtors to be ſued. A ſevere creditor has no popular character; what then was likely to be ſaid of him who employs the catchpoll under the appearance of charity? The clamour againſt him was loud, and the reſentment of the populace outrageous; he was therefore forced to drop his ſcheme, and own the folly of expecting punctuality from the poor.

His aſperity continually increaſing, condemned him to ſolitude; and his reſentment of ſolitude ſharpened his aſperity. He was not,

not, however, totally deſerted: ſome men of learning, and ſome women of elegance, often viſited him; and he wrote from time to time either verſe or proſe; of his verſes he willingly gave copies, and is ſuppoſed to have felt no diſcontent when he ſaw them printed. His favourite maxim was *vive la bagatelle;* he thought trifles a neceſſary part of life, and perhaps found them neceſſary to himſelf. It ſeems impoſſible to him to be idle, and his diſorders made it difficult or dangerous to be long ſeriouſly ſtudious, or laboriouſly diligent. The love of eaſe is always gaining upon age, and he had one temptation to petty amuſements peculiar to himſelf; whatever he did, he was ſure to hear applauded; and ſuch was his predominance over all that approached, that all their applauſes were probably ſincere. He that is much flattered, ſoon learns to flatter himſelf: we are commonly taught our duty by fear or ſhame, and how can they act upon the man who hears nothing but his own praiſes?

As his years increaſed, his fits of giddineſs and deafneſs grew more frequent, and his

deafneſs made converſation difficult; they grew likewiſe more ſevere, till in 1736, as he was writing a poem called *The Legion Club*, he was ſeized with a fit ſo painful, and ſo long continued, that he never after thought it proper to attempt any work of thought or labour.

He was always careful of his money, and was therefore no liberal entertainer; but was leſs frugal of his wine than of his meat. When his friends of either ſex came to him, in expectation of a dinner, his cuſtom was to give every one a ſhilling, that they might pleaſe themſelves with their proviſion. At laſt his avarice grew too powerful for his kindneſs; he would refuſe a bottle of wine, and in Ireland no man viſits where he cannot drink.

Having thus excluded converſation, and deſiſted from ſtudy, he had neither buſineſs nor amuſement; for having, by ſome ridiculous reſolution or mad vow, determined never to wear ſpectacles, he could make little uſe of books in his later years: his ideas, therefore,

therefore, being neither renovated by diſcourſe nor increaſed by reading, wore gradually away, and left his mind vacant to the vexations of the hour, till at laſt his anger was heightened into madneſs.

He however permitted one book to be publiſhed, which had been the production of former years; *Polite Converſation*, which appeared in 1738. The *Directions for Servants* was printed ſoon after his death. Theſe two performances ſhew a mind inceſſantly attentive, and, when it was not employed upon great things, buſy with minute occurrences. It is apparent that he muſt have had the habit of noting whatever he obſerved; for ſuch a number of particulars could never have been aſſembled by the power of recollection.

He grew more violent; and his mental powers declined till (1741) it was found neceſſary that legal guardians ſhould be appointed of his perſon and fortune. He now loſt diſtinction. His madneſs was compounded of rage and fatuity. The laſt face that he

he knew was that of Mrs. Whiteway, and her he ceaſed to know in a little time. His meat was brought him cut into mouthfuls; but he would never touch it while the ſervant ſtaid, and at laſt, after it had ſtood perhaps an hour, would eat it walking; for he continued his old habit, and was on his feet ten hours a-day.

Next year (1742) he had an inflammation in his left eye, which ſwelled it to the ſize of an egg, with boils in other parts; he was kept long waking with the pain, and was not eaſily reſtrained by five attendants from tearing out his eye.

The tumour at laſt ſubſided; and a ſhort interval of reaſon enſuing, in which he knew his phyſician and his family, gave hopes of his recovery; but in a few days he ſunk into lethargick ſtupidity, motionleſs, heedleſs, and ſpeechleſs. But it is ſaid, that, after a year of total ſilence, when his houſekeeper, on the 30th of November, told him that the uſual bonfires and illuminations were preparing to celebrate his birth-day, he anſwered,

ſwered, *It is all folly; they had better let it alone.*

It is remembered that he afterwards ſpoke now and then, or gave ſome intimation of a meaning; but at laſt ſunk into perfect ſilence, which continued till about the end of October 1744, when, in his ſeventy-eighth year, he expired without a ſtruggle.

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WHEN Swift is conſidered as an author, it is juſt to eſtimate his powers by their effects. In the reign of Queen Anne he turned the ſtream of popularity againſt the Whigs, and muſt be confeſſed to have dictated for a time the political opinions of the Engliſh nation. In the ſucceeding reign he delivered Ireland from plunder and oppreſſion; and ſhewed that wit, confederated with truth, had ſuch force as authority was unable to reſiſt. He ſaid truly of himſelf, that Ireland *was his debtor*. It was from the time when he firſt began to patronize the Iriſh, that they may date their riches and proſperity. He taught them

them firſt to know their own intereſt, their weight, and their ſtrength, and gave them ſpirit to aſſert that equality with their fellow-ſubjects to which they have ever ſince been making vigorous advances, and to claim thoſe rights which they have at laſt eſtabliſhed. Nor can they be charged with ingratitude to their benefactor; for they reverenced him as a guardian, and obeyed him as a dictator.

In his works, he has given very different ſpecimens both of ſentiment and expreſſion. His *Tale of a Tub* has little reſemblance to his other pieces. It exhibits a vehemence and rapidity of mind, a copiouſneſs of images, and vivacity of diction, ſuch as he afterwards never poſſeſſed, or never exerted. It is of a mode ſo diſtinct and peculiar, that it muſt be conſidered by itſelf; what is true of that, is not true of any thing elſe which he has written.

In his other works is found an equable tenour of eaſy language, which rather trickles than flows. His delight was in ſimplicity. That he has in his works no metaphor, as has

has been ſaid, is not true; but his few metaphors ſeem to be received rather by neceſſity than choice. He ſtudied purity; and though perhaps all his ſtrictures are not exact, yet it is not often that ſoleciſms can be found; and whoever depends on his authority may generally conclude himſelf ſafe. His ſentences are never too much dilated or contracted; and it will not be eaſy to find any embarraſſment in the complication of his clauſes, any inconſequence in his connections, or abruptneſs in his tranſitions.

His ſtyle was well ſuited to his thoughts, which are never ſubtiliſed by nice diſquiſitions, decorated by ſparkling conceits, elevated by ambitious ſentences, or variegated by far-ſought learning. He pays no court to the paſſions; he excites neither ſurpriſe nor admiration; he always underſtands himſelf and his reader always underſtands him: the peruſer of Swift wants little previous knowledge; it will be ſufficient that he is acquainted with common words and common things; he is neither required to mount elevations, nor to explore profundities; his paſ-

ſage is always on a level, along ſolid ground, without aſperities, without obſtruction.

This eaſy and ſafe conveyance of meaning it was Swift's deſire to attain, and for having attained he certainly deſerves praiſe, though perhaps not the higheſt praiſe. For purpoſes merely didactick, when ſomething is to be told that was not known before, it is in the higheſt degree proper, but againſt that inattention by which known truths are ſuffered to die neglected, it makes no proviſion; it inſtructs, but does not perſuade.

By his political education he was aſſociated with the Whigs; but he deſerted them when they deſerted their principles, yet without running into the contrary extreme; he continued throughout his life to retain the diſpoſition which he aſſigns to the *Church-of-England Man*, of thinking commonly with the Whigs of the State, and with the Tories of the Church.

He was a churchman rationally zealous; he deſired the proſperity and maintained the honour

honour of the Clergy; of the Diſſenters he did not wiſh to infringe the toleration, but he oppoſed their encroachments.

Of his duty as Dean he was very obſervant. He managed the revenues of his church with exact œconomy; and it is ſaid by Delany, that more money was, under his direction, laid out in repairs than had ever been in the ſame time ſince its firſt erection. Of his choir he was eminently careful; and, though he neither loved nor underſtood muſick, took care that all the ſingers were well qualified, admitting none without the teſtimony of ſkilful judges.

In his church he reſtored the practice of weekly communion, and diſtributed the ſacramental elements in the moſt ſolemn and devout manner with his own hand. He came to church every morning, preached commonly in his turn, and attended the evening anthem, that it might not be negligently performed.

He read the ſervice *rather with a ſtrong nervous voice than in a graceful manner; his*

*voice was sharp and high-toned, rather than harmonious.*

He entered upon the clerical ſtate with hope to excel in preaching; but complained, that, from the time of his political controverſies, *he could only preach pamphlets.* This cenſure of himſelf, if judgement be made from thoſe ſermons which have been publiſhed, was unreaſonably ſevere.

The ſuſpicions of his irreligion proceeded in a great meaſure from his dread of hypocriſy; inſtead of wiſhing to ſeem better, he delighted in ſeeming worſe than he was. He went in London to early prayers, leſt he ſhould be ſeen at church; he read prayers to his ſervants every morning with ſuch dexterous ſecrecy, that Dr. Delany was ſix months in his houſe before he knew it. He was not only careful to hide the good which he did, but willingly incurred the ſuſpicion of evil which he did not. He forgot what himſelf had formerly aſſerted, that hypocriſy is leſs miſchievous than open impiety. Dr. Delany, with all his zeal for his honour, has juſtly condemned this part of his character.

The

The perſon of Swift had not many recommendations. He had a kind of muddy complexion, which, though he waſhed himſelf with oriental ſcrupuloſity, did not look clear. He had a countenance ſour and ſevere, which he ſeldom ſoftened by any appearance of gaiety. He ſtubbornly reſiſted any tendency to laughter.

To his domeſticks he was naturally rough; and a man of a rigorous temper, with that vigilance of minute attention which his works diſcover, muſt have been a maſter that few could bear. That he was diſpoſed to do his ſervants good, on important occaſions, is no great mitigation; benefaction can be but rare, and tyrannick peeviſhneſs is perpetual. He did not ſpare the ſervants of others. Once, when he dined alone with the Earl of Orrery, he ſaid, of one that waited in the room, *That man has, ſince we ſat to the table, committed fifteen faults.* What the faults were, Lord Orrery, from whom I heard the ſtory, had not been attentive enough to diſcover. My number may perhaps not be exact.

In his œconomy he practiſed a peculiar and offenſive parcimony, without diſguiſe or apology. The practice of ſaving being once neceſſary, became habitual, and grew firſt ridiculous, and at laſt deteſtable. But his avarice, though it might exclude pleaſure, was never ſuffered to encroach upon his virtue. He was frugal by inclination, but liberal by principle; and if the purpoſe to which he deſtined his little accumulations be remembered, with his diſtribution of occaſional charity, it will perhaps appear that he only liked one mode of expence better than another, and ſaved only that he might have ſomething to give. He did not grow rich by injuring his ſucceſſors, but left both Laracor and the Deanery more valuable than he found them. —With all this talk of his covetouſneſs and generoſity, it ſhould be remembered that he was never rich. The revenue of his Deanery was not much more than ſeven hundred a year.

His beneficence was not graced with tenderneſs or civility; he relieved without pity, and aſſiſted without kindneſs, ſo that thoſe who were fed by him could hardly love him.

He

He made a rule to himſelf to give but one piece at a time, and therefore always ſtored his pocket with coins of different value.

Whatever he did, he ſeemed willing to do in a manner peculiar to himſelf, without ſufficiently conſidering that ſingularity, as it implies a contempt of the general practice, is a kind of defiance which juſtly provokes the hoſtility of ridicule; he therefore who indulges peculiar habits is worſe than others, if he be not better.

Of his humour, a ſtory told by Pope may afford a ſpecimen.

* "Dr. Swift has an odd, blunt way, that "is miſtaken, by ſtrangers, for ill-nature. "—'Tis ſo odd, that there's no deſcribing it "but by facts. I'll tell you one that firſt "comes into my head. One evening, Gay "and I went to ſee him: you know how in- "timately we were all acquainted. On our "coming in, 'Heyday, gentlemen (ſays the "Doctor), what's the meaning of this viſit?

* Spence.

"How

" How came you to leave all the great Lords
" that you are ſo fond of, to come hither to
" ſee a poor Dean?'—Becauſe we would ra-
" ther ſee you than any of them.—' Ay, any
" one that did not know ſo well as I do,
" might believe you. But ſince you are
" come, I muſt get ſome ſupper for you, I
" ſuppoſe.' No, Doctor, we have ſupped
" already.—' Supped already? that's impoſ-
" ſible! why, 'tis not eight o'clock yet.—
" That's very ſtrange: but, if you had not
" ſupped, I muſt have got ſomething for
" you.—Let me ſee, what ſhould I have
" had? A couple of lobſters; ay, that would
" have done very well; two ſhillings—tarts,
" a ſhilling: but you will drink a glaſs of
" wine with me, though you ſupped ſo much
" before your uſual time only to ſpare my
" pocket?'—No, we had rather talk with you
" than drink with you.—' But if you had
" ſupped with me, as in all reaſon you ought
" to have done, you muſt then have drunk
" with me.—A bottle of wine, two ſhillings
" —two and two is four, and one is five;
" juſt two-and-ſix-pence a-piece. There,
" Pope, there's half a crown for you, and
" there's another for you, Sir; for I won't
" ſave

" ſave any thing by you, I am determined." —
" This was all ſaid and done with his uſual
" ſerioufneſs on ſuch occaſions; and in ſpite
" of every thing we could ſay to the con-
" trary, he actually obliged us to take the
" money."

In the intercourſe of familiar life, he indulged his diſpoſition to petulance and ſarcaſm, and thought himſelf injured if the licentiouſneſs of his raillery, the freedom of his cenſures, or the petulance of his frolicks, was reſented or repreſſed. He predominated over his companions with very high aſcendency, and probably would bear none over whom he could not predominate. To give him advice was, in the ſtyle of his friend Delany, *to venture to ſpeak to him.* This cuſtomary ſuperiority ſoon grew too delicate for truth; and Swift, with all his penetration, allowed himſelf to be delighted with low flattery.

On all common occaſions, he habitually affects a ſtyle of arrogance, and dictates rather than perſuades. This authoritative and magiſterial language he expected to be received

ceived as his peculiar mode of jocularity; but he apparently flattered his own arrogance by an aſſumed predomination, in which he was ironical only to the reſentful, and to the ſubmiſſive ſufficiently ſerious.

He told ſtories with great felicity, and delighted in doing what he knew himſelf to do well. He was therefore captivated by the reſpectful ſilence of a ſteady liſtener, and told the ſame tales too often.

He did not, however, claim the right of talking alone; for it was his rule, when he had ſpoken a minute, to give room by a pauſe for any other ſpeaker. Of time, on all occaſions, he was an exact computer, and knew the minutes required to every common operation.

It may be juſtly ſuppoſed that there was in his converſation, what appears ſo frequently in his Letters, an affectation of familiarity with the Great, an ambition of momentary equality ſought and enjoyed by the neglect of thoſe ceremonies which cuſtom has eſtabliſhed as the barriers between one order of ſociety and

and another. This tranſgreſſion of regularity was by himſelf and his admirers termed greatneſs of ſoul. But a great mind diſdains to hold any thing by courteſy, and therefore never uſurps what a lawful claimant may take away. He that encroaches on another's dignity, puts himſelf in his power; he is either repelled with helpleſs indignity, or endured by clemency and condeſcenſion.

Of Swift's general habits of thinking if his Letters can be ſuppoſed to afford any evidence, he was not a man to be either loved or envied. He ſeems to have waſted life in diſcontent, by the rage of neglected pride, and the languiſhment of unſatisfied deſire. He is querulous and faſtidious, arrogant and malignant; he ſcarcely ſpeaks of himſelf but with indignant lamentations, or of others but with inſolent ſuperiority when he is gay, and with angry contempt when he is gloomy. From the Letters that paſs between him and Pope it might be inferred that they, with Arbuthnot and Gay, had engroſſed all the underſtanding and virtue of mankind, that their merits filled the world; or that there was no hope of more. They ſhew the age involved

involved in darkneſs, and ſhade the picture with fallen emulation.

When the Queen's death drove him into Ireland, he might be allowed to regret for a time the interception of his views, the extinction of his hopes, and his ejection from gay ſcenes, important employment, and ſplendid friendſhips; but when time had enabled reaſon to prevail over vexation, the complaints, which at firſt were natural, became ridiculous becauſe they were uſeleſs. But querulouſneſs was now grown habitual, and he cried out when he probably had ceaſed to feel. His reiterated wailings perſuaded Bolingbroke that he was really willing to quit his deanery for an Engliſh pariſh; and Bolingbroke procured an exchange, which was rejected, and Swift ſtill retained the pleaſure of complaining.

The greateſt difficulty that occurs, in analyſing his character, is to diſcover by what depravity of intellect he took delight in revolving ideas, from which almoſt every other mind ſhrinks with diſguſt. The ideas of pleaſure, even when criminal, may ſolicit

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the imagination; but what has diſeaſe, deformity, and filth, upon which the thoughts can be allured to dwell? Delany is willing to think that Swift's mind was not much tainted with this groſs corruption before his long viſit to Pope. He does not conſider how he degrades his hero, by making him at fifty-nine the pupil of turpitude, and liable to the malignant influence of an aſcendant mind. But the truth is, that Gulliver had deſcribed his *Yahoos* before the viſit, and he that had formed thoſe images had nothing filthy to learn.

I have here given the character of Swift as he exhibits himſelf to my perception; but now let another be heard, who knew him better; Dr. Delany, after long acquaintance, deſcribes him to Lord Orrery in theſe terms.

"My Lord, when you conſider Swift's "ſingular, peculiar, and moſt variegated "vein of wit, always rightly intended (al-"though not always ſo rightly directed), "delightful in many inſtances, and ſalutary, "even where it is moſt offenſive; when you

" conſider his ſtrict truth, his fortitude in re-
" ſiſting oppreſſion and arbitrary power; his
" fidelity in friendſhip, his ſincere love and
" zeal for religion, his uprightneſs in making
" right reſolutions, and his ſteadineſs in ad-
" hering to them; his care of his church, its
" choir, its œconomy, and its income; his
" attention to all thoſe that preached in his
" cathedral, in order to their amendment in
" pronunciation and ſtyle; as alſo his re-
" markable attention to the intereſt of his
" ſucceſſors, preferably to his own preſent
" emoluments; invincible patriotiſm, even
" to a country which he did not love; his
" very various, well-deviſed, well-judged,
" and extenſive charities, throughout his
" life, and his whole fortune (to ſay nothing
" of his wife's) conveyed to the ſame chriſt-
" ian purpoſes at his death; charities from
" which he could enjoy no honour, advan-
" tage or ſatisfaction of any kind in this
" world. When you conſider his ironical
" and humorous, as well as his ſerious ſchemes,
" for the promotion of true religion and vir-
" tue; his ſucceſs in ſoliciting for the Firſt
" Fruits and Twentieths, to the unſpeakable
" benefit of the eſtabliſhed Church of Ireland;

" and

"and his felicity (to rate it no higher) in "giving occaſion to the building of fifty new "churches in London.

"All this conſidered, the character of his "life will appear like that of his writings; "they will both bear to be re-conſidered and "re-examined with the utmoſt attention, "and always diſcover new beauties and ex-"cellencies upon every examination.

"They will bear to be conſidered as the "ſun, in which the brightneſs will hide the "blemiſhes; and whenever petulant igno-"rance, pride, malice, malignity, or envy, "interpoſes to cloud or ſully his fame, I will "take upon me to pronounce that the eclipſe "will not laſt long.

"To conclude—no man ever deſerved "better of any country than Swift did of "his. A ſteady, perſevering, inflexible "friend; a wiſe, a watchful, and a faithful "counſellor, under many ſevere trials and "bitter perſecutions, to the manifeſt hazard "both of his liberty and fortune.

" He lived a bleſſing, he died a benefac-
" tor, and his name will ever live an honour
" to Ireland."

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IN the Poetical Works of Dr. Swift there is not much upon which the critick can exerciſe his powers. They are often humorous, almoſt always light, and have the qualities which recommend ſuch compoſitions, eaſineſs and gaiety. They are, for the moſt part, what their author intended. The diction is correct, the numbers are ſmooth, and the rhymes exact. There ſeldom occurs a hard-laboured expreſſion, or a redundant epithet; all his verſes exemplify his own definition of a good ſtyle, they conſiſt of *proper words in proper places.*

To divide this Collection into claſſes, and ſhew how ſome pieces are groſs, and ſome are trifling, would be to tell the reader what he knows already, and to find faults of which the

the author could not be ignorant, who certainly wrote often not to his judgement, but his humour.

It was ſaid, in a Preface to one of the Iriſh editions, that Swift had never been known to take a ſingle thought from any writer, ancient or modern. This is not literally true; but perhaps no writer can eaſily be found that has borrowed ſo little, or that in all his excellencies and all his defects has ſo well maintained his claim to be conſidered as original.

# BROOME.

# BROOME.

WILLIAM BROOME was born in Cheſhire, as is ſaid, of very mean parents. Of the place of his birth, or the firſt part of his life, I have not been able to gain any intelligence. He was educated upon the foundation at Eton, and was captain of the ſchool a whole year, without any vacancy, by which he might have obtained a ſcholarſhip at King's College. Being by this delay, ſuch as is ſaid to have happened very rarely, ſuperannuated, he was ſent to St. John's College by the contributions of his friends, where he obtained a ſmall exhibition.

At his College he lived for ſome time in the ſame chamber with the well-known Ford,

by whom I have formerly heard him deſcribed as a contracted ſcholar and a mere verſifyer, unacquainted with life, and unſkilful in converſation. His addiction to metre was then ſuch, that his companions familiarly called him *Poet*. When he had opportunities of mingling with mankind, he cleared himſelf, as Ford likewiſe owned, from great part of his ſcholaſtick ruſt.

He appeared early in the world as a tranſlator of the *Iliads* into proſe, in conjunction with Ozell and Oldiſworth. How their ſeveral parts were diſtributed is not known. This is the tranſlation of which Ozell boaſted as ſuperior, in Toland's opinion, to that of Pope: it has long ſince vaniſhed, and is now in no danger from the criticks.

He was introduced to Mr. Pope, who was then viſiting Sir John Cotton at Madingley near Cambridge, and gained ſo much of his eſteem that he was employed, I believe, to make extracts from Euſtathius for the notes to the tranſlation of the *Iliad*; and in the volumes of poetry publiſhed by Lintot, commonly

commonly called *Pope's Miſcellanies*, many of his early pieces were inſerted.

Pope and Broome were to be yet more cloſely connected. When the ſucceſs of the *Iliad* gave encouragement to a verſion of the *Odyſſey*, Pope, weary of the toil, called Fenton and Broome to his aſſiſtance; and, taking only half the work upon himſelf, divided the other half between his partners, giving four books to Fenton, and eight to Broome. Fenton's books I have enumerated in his Life; to the lot of Broome fell the ſecond, ſixth, eighth, eleventh, twelfth, ſixteenth, eighteenth, and twenty-third, together with the burthen of writing all the notes.

As this tranſlation is a very important event in poetical hiſtory, the reader has a right to know upon what grounds I eſtabliſh my narration. That the verſion was not wholly Pope's, was always known: he had mentioned the aſſiſtance of two friends in his propoſals, and at the end of the work ſome account is given by Broome of their different parts, which however mentions only five books as written by the coadjutors; the fourth,

fourth and twentieth by Fenton; the ſixth, the eleventh, and the eighteenth by himſelf; though Pope, in an advertiſement prefixed afterwards to a new volume of his works, claimed only twelve. A natural curioſity after the real conduct of ſo great an undertaking, incited me once to enquire of Dr. Warburton, who told me, in his warm language, that he thought the relation given in the note *a lie;* but that he was not able to aſcertain the ſeveral ſhares. The intelligence which Dr. Warburton could not afford me, I obtained from Mr. Langton, to whom Mr. Spence had imparted it.

The price at which Pope purchaſed this aſſiſtance was three hundred pounds paid to Fenton, and five hundred to Broome, with as many copies as he wanted for his friends, which amounted to one hundred more. The payment made to Fenton I know but by hearſay; Broome's is very diſtinctly told by Pope, in the notes to the Dunciad.

It is evident, that, according to Pope's own eſtimate, Broome was unkindly treated. If four books could merit three hundred pounds,

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pounds, eight and all the notes, equivalent at leaſt to four, had certainly a right to more than ſix.

Broome probably conſidered himſelf as injured, and there was for ſome time more than coldneſs between him and his employer. He always ſpoke of Pope as too much a lover of money, and Pope purſued him with avowed hoſtility; for he not only named him diſreſpectfully in the *Dunciad*, but quoted him more than once in the *Bathos*, as a proficient in the *Art of Sinking*; and in his enumeration of the different kinds of poets diſtinguiſhed for the profound, he reckons Broome among *the* Parrots *who repeat another's words in ſuch a hoarſe odd tone as makes them ſeem their own.* I have been told that they were afterwards reconciled; but I am afraid their peace was without friendſhip.

He afterwards publiſhed a Miſcellany of Poems, which is inſerted, with corrections, in the late compilation.

He never roſe to very high dignity in the church. He was ſome time rector of Sturſton

ſton in Suffolk, where he married a wealthy widow; and afterwards, when the King viſited Cambridge (1728), became Doctor of Laws. He was (1733) preſented by the Crown to the rectory of *Pulham* in *Norfolk*, which he held with *Oakley Magna* in *Suffolk*, given him by the Lord Cornwallis, to whom he was chaplain, and who added the vicarage of *Eye* in *Suffolk*; he then reſigned *Pulham*, and retained the other two.

Towards the cloſe of his life he grew again poetical, and amuſed himſelf with tranſlating Odes of Anacreon, which he publiſhed in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, under the name of *Cheſter*.

He died at Bath, November 16, 1745, and was buried in the Abbey Church.

Of Broome, though it cannot be ſaid that he was a great poet, it would be unjuſt to deny that he was an excellent verſifyer; his lines are ſmooth and ſonorous, and his diction is ſelect and elegant. His rhymes are ſometimes unſuitable; in his *Melancholy* he makes *breath* rhyme

rhyme to *birth* in one place, and to *earth* in another. Thoſe faults occur but ſeldom; and he had ſuch power of words and numbers as fitted him for tranſlation; but, in his original works, recollection ſeems to have been his buſineſs more than invention. His imitations are ſo apparent, that it is part of his reader's employment to recall the verſes of ſome former poet. Sometimes he copies the moſt popular writers, for he ſeems ſcarcely to endeavour at concealment; and ſometimes he picks up fragments in obſcure corners. His lines to Fenton,

> Serene, the ſting of pain thy thoughts beguile,
> And make afflictions objects of a ſmile;

brought to my mind ſome lines on the death of Queen Mary, written by Barnes, of whom I ſhould not have expected to find an imitator;

> But thou, O Muſe, whoſe ſweet nēpenthean tongue
> Can charm the pangs of death with deathleſs ſong;
> Canſt *ſtinging plagues* with eaſy *thoughts beguile,*
> *Make* pains and tortures *objects of a ſmile.*

To detect his imitations were tedious and uſeleſs. What he takes he ſeldom makes worſe; and he cannot be juſtly thought a mean man whom Pope choſe for an aſſociate, and whoſe co-operation was conſidered by Pope's enemies as ſo important, that he was attacked by Henley with this ludicrous diſtich:

Pope came off clean with Homer; but they ſay
Broome went before, and kindly ſwept the way.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

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